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MONTANUS REDIVIVUS;

OR,

MONTANISM REVIVED,

IN THE

Principles *and* Diſcipline

OF THE

METHODISTS:

(Commonly called *Swadlers*)

BEING

The Subſtance of a SERMON upon 1 *John* iv. 1. preached in the Pariſh Church of *Hollymount*, in the Dioceſe of *Tuam*, the third *Sunday* after *Eaſter*, in the Year 1756.

To which are added,

Several LETTERS, which paſſed between the Rev. JOHN WESLEY, and the AUTHOR.

ALSO AN

APPENDIX.

By the Rev. Mr. JAMES CLARK,
A Preſbyter of the Dioceſe of TUAM.

DUBLIN:
Printed and ſold by H. SAUNDERS in *High-ſtreet*, at the Corner of *Chriſt-church-lane*.
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TO THE

Right Reverend Father in God,

WILLIAM,

LORD BISHOP OF

Clonfert and *Killmacduagh.*

MY LORD,

THERE are two ſpecial Reaſons which have induced me (tho' a Stranger to your Lordſhip) to aſſume the Boldneſs of laying the following Diſcourſe and Letters at your Lordſhip's Feet, and inſcribing them to your Name.

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1. Because they do almoſt intirely owe their publick Appearance in the World, to your Lordſhip's generous Encouragement and Benefaction, and conſequently have thereby acquired a Kind of natural Right to your Lordſhip's Countenance and Protection. They are now, my Lord, by your own Liberality, become, if I may ſo ſay, your Children by Adoption; and will therefore, I hope, ſtand acquitted of any undue Preſumption, in thus humbly craving both at your Lordſhip's Hands.

2. As the Divine, or (which I take to be the ſame in Effect) the Apoſtolical Right of Epiſcopacy, is none of the leaſt Queſtions controverted between me and Mr. *Weſley* in the following Letters, whither could I more naturally think of applying for Patronage and Protection, than to ſome one of that venerable Order? And among them, to whom more juſtly (had I not been by Duty and Inclination induced thereto) than to your Lordſhip, who have taken ſuch Pains about, and ſo

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ſo generouſly contributed to the Publication of them?

THERE are, my Lord, a Set of Enthuſiaſtic Phariſees in Practice, but perfect Latitudinarians in Principle, ſprung up among us, who, at their firſt ſetting out, laid it down as a Principle to themſelves, by which they reſolved to govern themſelves in the Propagation of Methodiſm, That * Orthodoxy, or right and ſound Belief, was but a ſlender, if it may be deemed any Part at all of Religion.

IN Conſequence of this pernicious Maxim, they declare themſelves quite indifferent † as to any Form of Church Government, whether Preſbyterian, Independent, or Epiſcopal, and look upon the latter in no other Light than that of ſome human Law or Conſtitution, ſubject to be changed at Pleaſure. Hence they poſitively deny its divine Right and perpetual Obligation. No Wonder therefore that they do in all Things, almoſt,

* See Mr. *Weſley's True Account of the Methodiſts*, pag. 4.

† See Mr. *Weſley's Diſcourſe on Catholick Spirit.*

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act in a barefaced Defiance to the Authority and Juriſdiction of the Biſhops, the chief Governors of the Church; they have, without their Conſent and Approbation, formed Societies or Conventicles, under certain Rules of Diſcipline and Government of their own Invention, appointing Leaders, Directors, Superintendants, &c. over them: They have ſet up a new Miniſtry of their own, contrary to, and independent of, the Miniſtry of the Church; committing the preaching of the Word of Reconciliation, and the Exerciſe of the Power of the Keys, to mere Laymen and Mechanicks, in direct Oppoſition to an expreſs Article of that very Church whereof they do, with an amazing Confidence and Aſſurance, pretend to be not only Members, but the only true Members of it.

The Truth is, my Lord, tho' they do upon Occaſions come to our Churches and communicate with us, yet they have plainly enough inſinuated * to the World,

* See for this the ſame Mr. *Weſley*'s *Perſuaſive to Communion*, towards the latter End.

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World, that they not only wait for a ſeaſonable Opportunity, and more able Heads to form a new Church, and make a total Separation from us. This verifies the Obſervation of St. *Cyprian*, who, I remember, ſomewhere ſays, that Hereſies and Schiſms have and daily do ſpring from no other Root than Diſreſpect to the Perſon and Diſobedience to the Authority of the Biſhop, who, in the Language of the ſame venerable Father and glorious Martyr of Chriſt, is the *unus Judex vice Chriſti*, the one Judge, inſtead of Chriſt, to his own Church, which he is to govern as one that muſt give an Account of his Adminiſtration to the Lord, and to no other.

THESE Obſervations of St. *Cyprian* we have, my Lord, ſeen verified among ourſelves in the great Rebellion of 1641, in the laſt Century, when, upon the Diſſolution of our Government both in Church and State, ſuch an Inundation of vile and abominable Hereſies, Schiſms, and Sacrileges overflowed the three Nations, that they ſeemed as fertile in the

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Production of Monſters in Religion, as ever *Afric* was of Monſters in Nature: How far, or whether this may be the fatal Conſequence of that Spirit of Enthuſiaſm, which is always (I had almoſt ſaid naturally and neceſſarily) attended with Diſobedience to ſpiritual Superiors, and which is now let looſe among us, I ſhall not not take upon me to determine; but this, my Lord, I think I may venture to affirm, that if the ſame Cauſes may be concluded to produce the ſame Effects, the Conſequence of the preſent Spirit of Enthuſiaſm among us, eſpecially as it has and is daily getting Ground in our very Armies, may in time prove as deſtructive to our Church and State, as the ſame Spirit of Enthuſiaſm and Diſobedience did in the great Rebellion of 1641.

THESE Things being ſo, I think, my Lord, the Queſtion concerning the Divine Right of Epiſcopacy to be of very great Conſequence and Importance to the Purity, Peace, and Safety of our Church and State, in their preſent Frame and Con-

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Conſtitution; and that, conſequently, it is not only the Duty but the Intereſt of every true Son of the Church, upon all Occaſions, according to their Abilities and Opportunities, to aſſert the Authority and Juriſdiction of Biſhops, to vindicate the Honour and Dignity of their Perſons, and ſteadily to adhere to the Doctrine, Diſcipline, and Government of our Church in her preſent happy Conſtitution; with regard to which I think I may boldly venture to affirm, ſhe comes neareſt to the Primitive and Apoſtolick Pattern of any Chriſtian Church upon Earth. Towards this, my Lord, I have ventured to contribute my poor Mite, as far as my Adverſary gave me Occaſion or Provocation; and tho' I am ſenſible it is far, very far, from what might have been done upon the Occaſion by an abler Hand, yet as it was my All, and what I could attain to, I hope it will be accepted by the Fathers of our Church as the Widow's Mite was by our common Lord and Maſter: However, ſuch as it is I humbly offer it to your

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your Lordſhip, not indeed as any way worth your Lordſhip's Acceptance, but as the only Teſtimony I can give the World of that great Duty, Reſpect, and Gratitude for all your Lordſhip's Favours, with which I have the Honour to be, my Lord, may it pleaſe your Lordſhip,

Your Lordſhip's moſt dutiful,

Moſt obliged, and moſt

Obedient humble Servant,

JAMES CLARK.

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MONTANUS REDIVIVUS, &c.

1 JOHN iv. 1.

Beloved, believe not every Spirit, but try the Spirits whether they be of God, because many false Prophets are gone out into the World.

SAINT *John*, the Author of this Epistle, was the youngest of all the Apostles, and having a particular Promise from his divine Master, that he should not taste of Death, till he came in Judgment to take Vengeance on the *Jews* his Crucifiers; he, in consequence of both these Advantages, outlived and survived all the rest of his Fellow-Apostles, and consequently had the Mortification to hear of and to see many Pretenders to the Spirit, and many false Prophets, who endeavoured to corrupt the Simplicity of that Gospel, which was delivered to the Church by himself and his Fellow-Apostles. For this Reason he warns the Christians of his Time, in the Words of my Text, not to give Credit to every Spirit that would obtrude itself upon them for the Spirit of God, without a fair Trial whether their Pretences were true or false; because otherwise they were in manifest Danger of being deceived, there being so many Pretenders to the Spirit, and so many false Prophets gone out into the World.

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THE Advice ſuppoſes, that there were Rules whereby the Spirits might be tried and known, whether they were of God or not; for otherwiſe what elſe was it but a vain Piece of Mockery to deſire them to try the Spirits, if there were no Rule to try them by, by Application to which the Triers might be ſecured, that they were not deceived. And,

1. THIS Rule could not be any living, infallible Judge, always in being, to whom the Faithful were obliged to reſort, for Reſolution of their Doubts, upon the Appearance of any new or extraordinary Spirit (as the Advocates of the Church of *Rome* contend) for if this were the Caſe, either St. *John* himſelf, in this very Place, where he had ſo fair an Occaſion (and which he could not well, or conſiſtently with the faithful Diſcharge of his Office, avoid) or ſome other Apoſtle, in ſome of their Writings, would have pointed out this infallible Judge to us, and would have told us plainly who he was; or, in a Word, would have deſcribed him after ſuch a manner, that there would be no Danger or Poſſibility of miſtaking his Perſon, or the Place of his Reſidence or Abode. But there is a moſt profound Silence in all the New Teſtament, concerning ſuch an infallible Judge, always in being, and conſequently no ſuch infallible Judge was appointed by Chriſt or his Apoſtles, for Trial of Spirits. Nor yet,

2. CAN the greateſt outward Show of Piety, Sanctity or Devotion, be either a ſafe or ſufficient Rule, to try whether a Spirit be from God, or not; becauſe it is very poſſible that the greateſt Villainy, Corruption, and Hypocriſy may be concealed under ſuch an outward Show; as in the Caſe of the Scribes and Phariſees of old, and eſpecially becauſe St. *Paul*[*] aſſures us, that Satan is often transformed into an Angel of Light, and conſequently may, very poſſibly, deceive

[*] 2 Cor. xi. 14.

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ceive [b] us, under the greateſt and ſtrongeſt Pretences to Piety and Devotion. Moreover, outward Piety and Devotion are the Sheep's Cloathing, under which falſe Prophets generally (in order to deceive more ſucceſsfully) make their Appearance; and conſequently the greateſt outward Show of Piety and Devotion, can be no ſafe or ſufficient Rule to try whether a Spirit be from God, or not. We muſt therefore proceed farther, and ſee what other Rules there may be for the Trial of Spirits; and theſe following Rules ſeem to me to be very ſafe and ſufficient for that End and Purpoſe, as being all either founded on Reaſon, or warranted by Scripture Authority, or Example.

1. ANY Spirit which does, under any Pretence whatſoever, endeavour to withdraw us from the Worſhip of the One True God, to the Worſhip of any created Being, how great or excellent ſoever it may be, and conſequently to Idolatry of any Kind or Degree, muſt certainly be a falſe Spirit, and cannot be of God.

THIS was a Rule given by *Moſes* [c] to the Children of *Iſrael*; for if any Prophet or Dreamer of Dreams ſhould come to them, in order or with a Deſign to ſeduce them from the Worſhip of JEHOVAH, to the Worſhip of the Gods of their neighbouring Nations, he commanded them inſtantly, without more ado, to put ſuch a Prophet or Dreamer of Dreams to Death, even tho' the Prophecy or Dream, upon the Credit of which he endeavoured to ſeduce them, had come never ſo punctually to paſs: And very juſtly, becauſe to ſuppoſe or imagine that ſuch a Spirit could be from God, was to ſuppoſe or imagine, that God would be aiding and

[b] This appears by the Hiſtory of Major *Weir*, the ſuppoſed *Scotch* Wizard, than whom no Man ever had a greater outward Appearance of Piety and Devotion; he preached and prayed like an Angel, and yet all the while he was a ſworn Slave and Vaſſal to the Devil.

[c] Deut. xiii.

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assisting to the dishonouring of himself, and giving his Glory to another; and if God were thus divided against himself, how then could his Kingdom stand?

2. ANY Spirit that imposes any necessary Article of Faith, or any necessary Point of Practice upon the Consciences of Men, contrary to, or besides, or over and above what is revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures, must certainly be a Spirit of Falshood, and cannot be of or from God.

FOR Scripture being confessedly a Divine Revelation, to admit or allow any thing as necessary matter of Revelation, which is either contrary to Scripture, or over and above what is therein expresly contained, or deducible from thence by clear and evident Deduction of Reason, is to affirm either that God contradicts himself, or that Scripture does not contain Matter sufficient for Salvation; the former of which is Blasphemy so much as to imagine, and the latter (to call it by no worse a Name at present) is a very false and dangerous Error.

3. ANY Spirit whatsoever that endeavours, upon any Pretence whatsoever, to weaken or overthrow any known or evident Principle of natural Religion, in order to establish or enforce any Mystery of revealed Religion, must certainly be a false Spirit, and cannot be from God.

THERE are only two ways by which God does, or indeed can, reveal his Will to Mankind, the one by Nature and Reason, and the other by immediate Revelation. Now these two are not opposite or contradictory the one to the other; but, on the contrary, they are subservient to, and mutually support each other; and therefore to set them at Variance with each other, that is, to endeavour by Revelation to weaken or overthrow the Religion of Nature, or by the Religion of Nature to supersede revealed Religion, is to endeavour, in Effect, to banish all Religion (whether natural or revealed) out of the World, which can never be

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be ſuppoſed to be the Deſign of any Spirit proceeding from God.

4. ANY Perſon whatſoever, that pretends to a Spirit of immediate Inſpiration and Revelation from the Holy Ghoſt, without proving his Pretenſions by ſuch Credentials as the Prophets under the Old Teſtament, and the Apoſtles and other inſpired Perſons under the New Teſtament, proved their Inſpirations by, that is, by real and undoubted Miracles, muſt be either a deluded Enthuſiaſt, or an arrant Cheat and Impoſtor.

GOD never ſent any Perſon with an extraordinary Meſſage or Commiſſion to the World, neither did he ever endow any with an extraordinary Spirit of Inſpiration or Revelation, without impowering him to prove his Miſſion, and the Truth of his Inſpirations and Revelations, with real Miracles. And it is but reaſonable it ſhould be ſo; for he that pretends to have the Truth of God in his Tongue, ſhould have the Power of God in his Hands, to prove the Truth of his Pretenſions; otherwiſe, when there are ſo many Sorts and Sizes of Pretenders to immediate Inſpiration and Revelation, all differing from each other, the Faithful would be at a Loſs which to give credit to, there being no imaginable Reaſon why we ſhould believe one more than another, upon the credit of their own bare Affirmation; for this Kind or Tribe of Pretenders are generally very confident and poſitive, and therefore without ſome infallible Teſt or Rule to judge of their ſeveral and different Pretenſions, no Man can rationally believe either the one or the other. In this Caſe we may truly ſay to them, what the Phariſees falſely ſaid to our bleſſed Saviour, [d] *ye bear Record of yourſelves, therefore your Record is not true*; and until they can truly anſwer as he did, *the Works that I do* (that is, the Miracles which I work) *in my Father's Name, they bear Record of me*, we may, without the leaſt Prejudice to Truth

[d] John viii. 13.

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or Offence to Charity, conclude that they are deluded Enthuſiaſts, or arrant Cheats and Impoſtors.

In a Word, this has been conſtantly the way in which God has been pleaſed to confirm the Miſſion of all thoſe, whom he has been pleaſed to endow with a Spirit of immediate Inſpiration and Revelation; and the Church of God has, in all Ages, condemned all Pretenders to ſuch a Spirit, without ſuch Credentials, for deluded Enthuſiaſts or Impoſtors.

5. Any Spirit that aſſumes to itſelf an Authority or Power of becoming a publick Preacher or Teacher of God's Word in the Church, or offering and preſenting the Prayers of the Faithful to the Throne of Grace, without a regular Call from the chief Governors of that Church, wherein they thus take upon themſelves the Office of publick Preachers and Teachers, or without an immediate and ſpecial Commiſſion from Heaven, teſtified by Miracles, is a falſe and ſchiſmatical Spirit, and can never be from God; and all thoſe who abet, countenance, or encourage ſuch a Spirit, are guilty of Sacrilege, and a manifeſt Contempt of, and Diſreſpect to, the Ordinance and Inſtitution of Chriſt.

In ſhort, it is a manifeſt Spice of the Sin of *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, whom the Earth ſwallowed up alive, together with all that appertained to them, for their ſacrilegious Preſumption and Incroachment on the ſacerdotal Office: Theſe Levites imagined, that there was no ſuch mighty Matter in ſlaying the Sacrifices, laying them in order upon the Altar, and burning a little Incenſe, but that they themſelves were as well qualified to execute ſuch Functions as the Prieſt: Their Pretence for this was, that they were as holy as the Prieſts; why then might they not do theſe Things as well and to as good Purpoſe as they did. *Ye take too much upon you*, (ſaid they to *Moſes* and *Aaron*) *ſeeing all the Congregation is holy, and the Lord is among them.* Even ſo, in Effect, do their

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their modern Disciples argue; 'Ye take too much 'upon you, ye Bishops and Priests, since the Laity 'are holy, and since they know and read the Scrip-'tures as well as you, why then may not they preach 'as well as you?' But if the Levites, who were an inferior Order of the *Jewish* Clergy, appointed to assist the Priests in the Service of the Tabernacle, as the Deacons, in the Christian Church, were instituted to be Assistants to the Christian Priesthood, in the Celebration of the Christian Mysteries, were thus fearfully and terribly punished, for incroaching upon such Offices and Functions as were reserved for the superior Order of Priests; what may not mere Laymen, who have no relation at all to the Priesthood, dread and fear, for incroaching upon the priestly Office? And although they may escape the Judgment of *Corah* and his Associates in this Life, it is much to be feared that they and their Abettors (unless they repent and recant their Errors) may meet with a much severer Punishment in the Life of the World to come.

Our blessed Saviour himself did not take upon him to be a publick Preacher or Teacher in the *Jewish* Church, till he was commissioned by an audible Voice from Heaven: The Apostles were commanded to tarry at *Jerusalem*, until they were commissioned from Heaven to enter upon their publick Office, and were accordingly, in ten Days after our Saviour's Ascension into Heaven, authorised so to do, by the miraculous Descent of the Holy Ghost upon them, on the Day of Pentecost. The seven first Deacons, though all good Men, and full of the Holy Ghost, were not allowed so much as to take care of the Poor, or to distribute the Alms of the Faithful among them (which was the original Office they were instituted to) until they were publickly ordained by the Hands of the [e] Apostles: And it is very remarkable, that though *Paul* and *Barnabas* were some time before called to be super-

[e] Acts vi. 5, 6.

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numerary Apoſtles at large, yet when it pleaſed the Holy Ghoſt to ſet them apart for a peculiar or particular Miniſtry, it was thought fit by the ſame Holy Spirit, that they ſhould be ordained for that Miniſtry by the Church at *Antioch*; for whilſt the Church there miniſtred unto the Lord and faſted, the Holy Ghoſt ſaid, *Separate me* Barnabas *and* Saul *for the Work whereunto I have called them; and when they had faſted and prayed they laid their Hands on them, and ſent them away*[t].

I GRANT indeed that a Layman, having a competent Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures and of the Chriſtian Doctrine, coming to a Country where the Name of Chriſt is either not known or not acknowledged, and being moved with an holy Zeal, and a ſuitable Reſolution to attempt the Converſion of the Inhabitants, in that caſe he may lawfully become a publick Preacher. But the Caſe is quite different in a Chriſtian Church, formed and ſettled under proper Officers, according to the Rules of the Goſpel, and the Laws and Diſcipline of the Society; for in that Caſe no mere Layman, how holy or learned ſoever he may be, can, without a ſacrilegious Preſumption, take upon himſelf the Office of a publick Preacher, or Teacher of God's Word; becauſe it is againſt all Rule and Order, it creates Confuſion, Diſorder, and Faction, and is utterly inconſiſtent with the Difference and Diſtinction between Clergy and Laity, which Chriſt has ſettled and appointed in his Church. In one Word, a Layman may as well take upon him to adminiſter the Sacraments, and perform all other eccleſiaſtical Functions, as to be a publick Preacher, having as much Authority (that is, in Truth, none at all) for the one as for the other.

LASTLY, any Spirit that takes upon itſelf to make the Way to Heaven more narrow and difficult than either Jeſus Chriſt or his holy Apoſtles have made it, and

[t] Acts xiii. 2, 3.

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and that requires such Things from the Faithful, as necessary to Salvation, which (morally speaking) are not in the Power of human Nature, in its present State and Condition, to perform, is certainly a false Spirit, and consequently cannot be from God. For this is evidently to preach another Gospel, different from that which Jesus Christ and his Apostles preached, which whosoever presumes to do (even tho' he were an Angel from Heaven) we are warranted by [g] St. *Paul* to pronounce him accursed.

THERE might be other Rules assigned for the Trial of Spirits, but these which I have laid down seem to me to be abundantly sufficient, and are withal so plain and easy, and so obvious to the meanest Capacity, and all of them so agreeable to Reason, and to Scripture Authority and Example, that so long as we hold to them, in our Judgment upon any new or extraordinary Spirit, there can be no great Fear or Danger of our being deceived by any false Pretenders to the Spirit, or to Prophesy.

LET us now proceed, and bring some of these Pretenders to the Spirit, both antient and modern, to a fair Trial by these Rules; and then let every one judge for himself, whether they be of God, or whether they may be ranked among those false Prophets which, in St. *John*'s time, or since, were gone out into the World.

I BEGIN with the antient, and among them shall insist only upon one, because he was the grand Patriarch of all succeeding Enthusiasts, or Pretenders to the Spirit; and especially because he at first set up with the very same Pretences that our modern Enthusiasts, the Methodists, have done; and because, if we may believe a very learned and ingenious Author of the last [h] Century, we feel the ill Effects of his Spirit both in the Eastern and Western Churches to this very Day.

IT

[g] Gal. i. 8. [h] See the excellent Historical Account of Montanism, published by Dr. *Hicks*.

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IT was about the middle [h] of the ſecond Century of Chriſtianity that *Montanus*, the Arch-Heretick, and Proto-Patriarch of all Enthuſiaſts, made his Appearance in the World: He was a Native of *Phrygia*, and was no ſooner converted to the Chriſtian Faith, than he appeared very zealous for the Honour and Improvement of his new Religion; which Temper, when unattended with Calmneſs and Solidity of Judgment, are apt to hurry thoſe that are poſſeſſed of it into violent Extremes, and in the Concluſion proves very pernicious to Religion, which was the Caſe of *Montanus*.

HE began (as all Hereticks and Schiſmaticks, and eſpecially our modern Methodiſts, generally do) with accuſing and complaining of the Biſhops and their Clergy, as careleſs and negligent in their Duties, and remiſs in their Diſcipline: He taxed them with want of Zeal, and with falling from their firſt Love; with neglecting the Spirit and Life of Chriſtianity, and contenting themſelves merely and only with the bare and outward Letter, and Form of it. In a Word, he confidently charged them with being intirely void of the Spirit, and with leading mere animal and phyſical Lives.

HEREUPON, without any Authority either from God or Man, being neither Biſhop, Prieſt, nor Deacon, but a mere Layman, he ſet up for a Reformer of theſe Abuſes, and for raiſing Chriſtianity, by a new and before unheard of Diſpenſation (of which he pretended the Holy Ghoſt had appointed him to be the Adminiſtrator) to a higher pitch of Spirituality and Perfection, than ever it was hitherto attempted to be raiſed to, not only by the Biſhops and Clergy, but even by the Apoſtles themſelves. Theſe Pretences, together with the great Strictneſs and Regularity (at leaſt in outward Appearance) of his Life and Converſation, made him be ſoon taken Notice of, and admired and followed by

[h] In the Reign of *M. Antoninus* and *L. Verus*.

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by Numbers of ſimple but well-meaning Chriſtians, by whom he was looked upon to be τινα μεγαν, ſome great one, and no leſs than the Vicar and Vicegerent of the Holy Ghoſt; as others look on the Pope to be the Vicar and Vicegerent of Chriſt.

WHAT mainly and chiefly contributed to *Montanus*'s having ſo many Followers and Admirers, was, that whereas all other Hereticks and Schiſmaticks, that went before him, maintained ſome blaſphemous Tenets againſt the Perſon and Nature of Chriſt, and ſuch as were ſhocking to all Chriſtian Ears; *Montanus*, on the contrary, at his firſt ſetting up, either really was, or pretended to be, very orthodox in the Faith, and differed not from the Church as to any one Article of the Creed; he was conſtant in frequenting the publick Aſſemblies, receiving the Sacrament, and in performing all other Duties of Religion, in the Way and according to the Rules of the Church: But at the ſame time (like the Methodiſts) he and his Followers held private Meetings and Conventicles, where they exerciſed themſelves with Prayer and Preaching, or, as they choſe to call it, with Prophecying. Here he tied down his Diſciples to much more ſtrict and ſevere Rules, and Acts of Mortification, Self-denial, and Faſting, than the Church either required or impoſed upon the Faithful: He formed them into ſeveral and diſtinct Societies, under certain Rules of Diſcipline of his own framing, in order to prepare them for the Reception of the Spirit.

MONTANUS had not long followed theſe Rules and purgative Preparations, when the Spirit that poſſeſſed him diſcovered itſelf by very extraordinary Effects; for it uſed to ſeize him at certain Times, and caſt him into convulſive and preternatural Agitations and Shakings: During the Continuance of theſe paroxyſtatick Fits, he uttered a great many incoherent Things in a lofty and prophetick Stile; of all which he either really did (or pretended) not to remember one Word,

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Word, when he recovered out of his Fits; but being taken down in Writing by ſome of the By-ſtanders, they were publiſhed and handed about as the immediate Dictates and Oracles of the Holy Ghoſt, who was verily believed by his Followers and Diſciples to ſpeak thro' *Montanus*.

THE Subject-matter of theſe Prophecies was for the moſt part Denunciations of God's Judgments upon the Church for her Lukewarmneſs, and want of Zeal to promote the ſpiritual Kingdom of Chriſt, and for her oppoſition to that Diſpenſation which the Holy Ghoſt, by the Miniſtry of his Vicegerent *Montanus*, was about to eſtabliſh. And although he pretended that theſe Judgments were immediately to fall upon her, yet it was obſerved that for forty Years, after the Commencement of theſe Prophecies, the Church never enjoyed more peaceable Times, nor was the State more free from either foreign or domeſtick Wars or Commotions.

WHEN the Biſhops and Governors of the Church (who at firſt winked at *Montanus* and his Followers, thinking them to be a well meaning, tho' miſtaken People, that only aimed at the Reformation of Mens Manners) perceived to what extravagant Heights the Spirit of *Montanus* carried him, thought it was high time to look about them; they reſolved therefore to bring this Spirit to a fair Trial, to examine its Pretences, that, if it was found to be from God, they might prepare themſelves for the Reception of it, and ſubmit themſelves to its Directions; but if it was found to be otherwiſe, that they might arm the Faithful, and warn them againſt the Contagion and Infection of it.

ACCORDINGLY therefore they offered to [1] adjure this Spirit in the Name of Chriſt, promiſing that if, upon

[1] This was a common and ordinary Method of Trial, whilſt the miraculous Powers of the Holy Ghoſt remained (as they did then) in the Church; but theſe miraculous Powers being long ago ceaſed, this way of trying Spirits is conſequently ſuperſeded.

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upon its being ſo adjured, it did not confeſs itſelf to be an evil Spirit, they would with all Chearfulneſs ſubmit to it, and prepare themſelves with all Alacrity for the Reception and Entertainment of that new, heavenly and paradiſaical State which it promiſed to introduce.

But *Montanus* and his Followers (for he had his Favourers even among the Biſhops) were too wiſe to put their Cauſe to this Iſſue; and therefore they utterly refuſed to ſubmit to this way of Trial, looking upon it as a great Diſparagement to, and Reflection upon the Paraclete or Holy Ghoſt, who, they affirmed, ſpake thro' *Montanus*; and when ſome [k] Catholick Biſhops did, notwithſtanding, attempt to adjure his Spirit, they were with Violence prevented from making the Attempt, having their Mouths ſtopped, and being forcibly driven out of the Aſſembly, where the Attempt was to be made, by the Friends of *Montanus*.

Hereupon *Montanus* and all his Prophets, both Male and Female (for he had them of both Sexes) and all his other Aſſociates, were ſolemnly excommunicated by the Catholick Biſhops of *Phrygia*; and the Montaniſts thereupon did excommunicate the Catholicks, forming themſelves into a new Church, and ſetting up Altar againſt Altar.

It is almoſt incredible to relate to what height of ſpiritual Madneſs and Profaneneſs theſe enthuſiaſtick Viſionaries were led by the Spirit that poſſeſſed them, after they were thus judicially given over to Satan, by the chief Governors of the Church: The learned Author already mentioned clearly proves, that this Spirit, after many various Changes and Revolutions, and appearing under ſeveral different Forms, ended at laſt in Mahometiſm in the Eaſt, and Popery in the Weſt: And that we do, in ſome meaſure, feel the Effects of

[k] Theſe were *Zoticus* of *Comanes*, and *Julianus* of *Apamea*, as *Euſeb.* lib. 5. c. 16. from a Fragment of *Apollinaris*, Biſhop of *Hieropolis*, informs us.

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of it in the Reformed Churches, at this very Day.

As to the Church of *Rome*, it is too plain that moſt of the Doctrines peculiar to herſelf, are but ſo many Plants grafted upon Montaniſt (that is, upon enthuſiaſtick) Stoicks, particularly the Doctrine of the Pope's Infallibility, which can never be accounted for upon any other Footing than that of immediate Inſpiration from the Holy Ghoſt; and moſt of all her other abſurd Tenets, ſuch as [1] Tranſubſtantiation, Purgatory, *&c. &c* however Scripture and Tradition are pretended for them, owe their Enthuſiaſm to ſome imaginary Viſions and Revelations, which their pretended Saints, and Heads of religious Orders, either had, or pretended to have had, about them. This will appear to any one that reads St. *Gregory*'s Dialogues, as to the Article of Purgatory, then firſt beginning to appear in the Weſtern Church, after its being diſcarded by the *Grecian* and Eaſtern Churches; and is further plain from the Doctrine of the immaculate Conception of the bleſſed Virgin *Mary*, which owes its firſt Riſe to the Viſions and Revelations of St. *Bridget*; but unfortunately for her, and her Doctrine too, St. *Catharine* of *Siena* had her Viſions and Revelations to the contrary: So the Doctrine of the Immaculate Conception is ſtill, as it ever has been, conteſted between the Franciſcans and Jeſuits, who ſtand up for the Revelation of St. *Bridget*, on the one Hand, and the whole Body of the Dominicans, who ſtand up as vigorouſly for the Revelations of St. *Catharine*, a profeſſed Virgin of their own Order, on the other Hand.

NOR

[1] Some are of Opinion, that the Montaniſts were the firſt Broachers of Tranſubſtantiation, being confidently accuſed by ſome of the Antients, of kneading the Seed of one of their *Pneumatici*, or ſpiritual Men, with the Bread of their profane Myſteries, in order to make it literally the Body of a Man.

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NOR has the Reformed Church been free from the Infection of this Spirit of Enthuſiaſm: In the great Rebellion of 1641, there was ſuch a Spirit of Enthuſiaſm and Fanaticiſm let looſe upon theſe Nations, as ended at laſt in the total Overthrow of our excellent Conſtitution both in Church and State; the Pulpits were left open to every bold Intruder (even to the common Foot Soldiers) who fancied himſelf a gifted Perſon, or inſpired by the Holy Ghoſt; the Conſequence of which was ſuch an Inundation of vile Hereſies, and monſtrous Opinions in Religion, as if all the Gates of Hell had been opened and let looſe upon the Nations, which at that time ſeemed to be as productive of Monſters in Religion, as ever *Africk* was of Monſters in Nature. It was then that the Names of Quakers, Muggletonians, Seekers, Ranters, *&c. &c.* were firſt heard of in theſe Churches and Nations; and all this owing to a blaſphemous Pretence to the Spirit, and a Violation of all Rules and Orders, every one, without any regular Call, or Examination from the Governors of the Church, being, without Check or Controul, ſuffered to exerciſe their Gifts, and deceive the People.

NOR can we ſay that we are yet intirely free from the miſchievous Conſequences of this Pretence to the Spirit, and the ſacrilegious and ſchiſmatical Attempts of the Laity, who aſſume to themſelves a Liberty of preaching, without any Call from God or Man. This is too plain from the Principles of the Methodiſts, who ſet up at firſt with the very ſame Pretences that *Montanus* and his Followers did: They, as well as he, accuſe the Biſhops and Clergy for Negligence and Careleſſneſs in the diſcharge of their Duty, and Remiſſneſs in Diſcipline: They charge them with want of Zeal for the Spirit and Life of Chriſtianity, and with living mere animal Lives, quite void of the Spirit; and though they ſtill keep fair with the Church, and do not openly profeſs to differ with her in Doctrine,

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trine, or in any Article of the Creed, and that they frequent her Aſſemblies, *&c.* yet they, like the Montaniſts, have their private Aſſemblies and Conventicles; they form themſelves into ſeveral Bands or Societies, under Rules of Diſcipline of their own framing, in direct Oppoſition to the chief Governors of the Church; they, like *Montanus*, pretend to a Spirit of immediate Inſpiration and Revelation, and they permit and allow any Layman, who fancies himſelf a gifted Perſon, to be a publick Preacher.

In a Word, there ſeems to be a very great Affinity between the Spirit of Montaniſm, at its firſt Appearance, and the Spirit of Methodiſm; they both went upon the ſame Plan, and with the ſame View and Deſign, of raiſing the Chriſtian Religion to a greater height of Perfection and Spirituality than it was before; and both oblige their Diſciples to much more frequent and ſevere Acts of Mortification, Faſting, and Self-denial, than the Catholick Church ever thought fit or neceſſary to oblige her Sons to, or to require from them: So that Methodiſm, in reality, is no other than Montaniſm revived, under another Form and another Name; the Scene, it is true, is ſhifted, and the Actors are changed, but the ſame Drama is ſtill carried on, and the ſame Plot continued.

There ſeems but one Circumſtance wanting to render the Parallel between them complete, and that is, the parecſtatick Fits, and preternatural Agitations and Shakings, into which *Montanus* and his Followers uſed to fall: But in this alſo the Methodiſts may be looked upon as moved by the ſame Spirit that *Montanus* was acted by; for Numbers of them, when they receive what they call the faith, [m] fall flat on the Ground, and continue in a Trance for ſome time; others roar and groan frightfully, and are almoſt ſhaken to Pieces; others are ſeized with an immode-

rate

[m] The Reader who will take the Pains to peruſe Mr. *Weſly*'s Diaries, will meet with Inſtances to this purpoſe in abundance.

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rate Fit of Laughter, which they cannot put a ſtop to, beſides many other Symptoms of their being poſſeſſed with ſome extraordinary Spirit; but whether a good or evil one, let the World judge, from the violent, uncouth, and ridiculous Effects which it has upon them, which by no means reſemble the mild and gentle Influences and Operations of the Spirit of God.

THAT the Methodiſts pretend to immediate Revelation, as much as ever the Montaniſts did, I partly know from very good Information; being once told by a Member of that Society (whom I knew to be a Man of a competent Share of Learning, and of a ſober Underſtanding, but who is ſince come to a better Mind, and upon diſcovery of their Hypocriſy has quited them) that he believed a certain Lay-preacher among them to be as much, and as highly inſpired, as ever the Apoſtle St. *Paul* was; and that Preacher himſelf has been frequently heard to ſay, that he believed himſelf as righteous and as free from Sin as ever Jeſus Chriſt was; for that it was impoſſible he could ſin, becauſe the Spirit of God dwelt bodily in him. What the End and Effect of ſuch blaſphemous Pretences as theſe may in time come to, God only knows, and we can only gueſs at. But if we may conclude that the ſame Cauſes will produce the ſame Effects (and ſure there is nothing unreaſonable or uncharitable in the Concluſion) we may venture to foretel, that they will, either ſooner or later, produce as great Miſchiefs to Chriſtianity in general, and the Reformation in particular, as ever the Spirit of *Montanus* did to the former.

SINCE the Spirit that poſſeſſed that Arch-Heretick, never carried him to a greater or higher pitch of Blaſphemy, than that which this Methodiſt Lay-preacher was guilty of, and how many more among them, over the three Nations, already have, or in time may ſet up for the ſame, or ſome other equally dangerous and blaſphemous Pretence, no Man can tell. But

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the plaineſt Mark of the Falſhood of the Spirit of theſe enthuſiaſtick Sectaries, in my Opinion, is their making the way to Heaven much more narrow and difficult than either Jeſus Chriſt or his Apoſtles have made it, and requiring ſuch Degrees of Perfection as are not in the Power of Human Nature, in its preſent State of Infirmity, to attain to; the natural Conſequence of which is, that ſuch as will find themſelves unable to arrive at ſuch Perfection, may (it is much to be feared) grow deſperate, and give themſelves up to all manner of Licentiouſneſs; and ſuch as through a heated and enthuſiaſtick Imagination, fancy that they either actually do, or can attain to ſuch Perfection, will be filled with all manner of ſpiritual Pride, Blaſphemy, and Arrogance, together with Contempt of, and uncharitable Cenſures on, their Brethren, who do not, or indeed cannot, come up to their fancied Degree of Innocence or Perfection.

I FIND it affirmed in ſome of their printed Pamphlets, "that a Man may do a great deal of Good, "and no manner of Harm, and may be conſtant "and regular in performing all the Duties of publick "and private Worſhip, *&c.* but that all this ſhall avail "him nothing towards attaining Salvation, unleſs he "attains to that paradiſaical State of Innocence in "which *Adam* was created, and in which he conti-"nued till his Fall, and which the good Angels have "continued in ſince their Creation;" and all this endeavoured to be proved from the Petition in the Lord's Prayer, wherein we are directed to pray that the Will of God may be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven; for if Chriſt, ſay they, did not know that this was both poſſible and neceſſary to be done, he would never direct us to pray for it. If this be really our Caſe, we may well cry out with the Diſciples of our Lord, [n] upon another Occaſion, *Who then can be ſaved?*

[n] See Mr. *Weſly*'s ſerious Anſwer to Dr. *Trap*, *paſſim*, but eſpecially pag. 39, 40.

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ſaved? And little Comfort can we have in thoſe gracious Expreſſions of his, when he aſſures us, that his *Yoke is eaſy*, and that his *Burthen is light*; for if this Doctrine be true, his Yoke (eſpecially in the preſent State and Condition of our corrupted Nature) is moſt uneaſy, and his Burthen is intolerable.

But be not deceived, my Brethren, for this is not the Goſpel of Chriſt, but a Goſpel of their own framing and inventing: The Goſpel of Chriſt requires no more from us than *Repentance towards God, and Faith towards our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, together with a ſincere Endeavour of Obedience to all his Commandments; which Endeavour, though it ſhould (as it neceſſarily muſt whilſt we are in the Body) be attended with many Frailties, Weakneſſes, and Infirmities, yet God, for the ſake of Chriſt's perfect and ſinleſs Obedience, and the Merits of his all-ſufficient Death and Paſſion, promiſes to accept of, inſtead of that ſinleſs and perfect Obedience, which was required from *Adam* by the Covenant of Works: For we are not now under the Law, or Covenant of Works, but under Grace, or the Covenant of Mercy, which makes all due Allowance for the Frailties of our corrupted Nature, that are not wilful, and obſtinately continued in, without Repentance, on account of the Death and Paſſion of our bleſſed Saviour: Whereas if the Doctrine of theſe Enthuſiaſts be true, and that we are ſtill tied down to the firſt Covenant made with *Adam*, all Difference between the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace is intirely taken away: And the whole Myſtery and Oeconomy of the Goſpel Diſpenſation is thereby overturned from the very Foundation; for Chriſt undertook the Oeconomy of our Redemption, in order to ſatisfy the Juſtice of his Father for our Sins, and to perform that perfect and ſinleſs Obedience in his own Perſon which was required from *Adam*, and in him from us, and which we, in the State of our fallen and corrupt Nature, were not able to perform:

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And we by a firm and lively Faith, relying intirely and caſting ourſelves wholly upon this ſinleſs and perfect Obedience of Chriſt, and the all-ſufficient Merits of his Death and Paſſion, together with hearty Repentance for all our Sins, Ignorances, and Infirmities, and a ſincere (though imperfect) Obedience, are, according to the Terms of the Goſpel, and the Covenant of Grace and Mercy, intitled to Salvation.

In a Word, this Doctrine is directly contrary to the expreſs Words of St. *John*, [o] who affirms, that *if we ſhould* fancy or *ſay that we have no Sin, we* only miſerably *deceive ourſelves, and* plainly diſcover that *the Truth is not us*; *but if we* humbly *confeſs and acknowledge our Sins*, (in which Repentance for them is implied) then *God is faithful and juſt*, to all his Promiſes in Chriſt, *and will* undoubtedly *forgive us our Sins, and cleanſe us from all Unrighteouſneſs.*

In which Words the Apoſtle clearly argues, that though we cannot with Truth ſay that we have no Sin, and conſequently cannot with Truth affirm that we have attained to the paradiſaical State of *Adam*'s Innocence before his Fall, yet we may, notwithſtanding this, ſtill expect Salvation, upon a ſincere Repentance, and humble Confeſſion and Acknowledgment of our Sins.

As to their Argument from the Petition in the Lord's Prayer, wherein we are directed to pray that the Will of God may be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven: We are to obſerve, that Particles of Parity or Compariſon in Scripture, do not always or neceſſarily infer or imply a mathematical Proportion or Equality, but ſometimes, and for the moſt part, they imply no more than a moral kind of Reſemblance, due regard had to the different Natures, Powers, and Circumſtances of the Things or Perſons compared. Thus, for inſtance, our Saviour deſires us to be merciful, [p] as our

[o] 1 John viii. 9. [p] Matt. v. 48.

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our heavenly Father is merciful; to be perfect, as he is perfect.

Now I will ſuppoſe (and as the World goes it is a bold Suppoſition) that no Man can be ſo religiouſly mad or crazy, as to fancy himſelf capable of equalling God, either in Mercy or any other Perfection, in a mathematical Proportion; and therefore the Deſign of theſe and the like Precepts and Exhortations, is no more than to incite us to imitate thoſe divine Graces and Perfections, ſo far as is conſiſtent with the different Natures of God and Man.

In like manner, when our Lord directs us to pray that the Will of God may be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven; this is by no means to be underſtood, of a mathematical Proportion or Equality, but of a moral Reſemblance, due regard had to the Difference between the Nature and Circumſtances of Men and Angels: For the Angels are pure, and immaterial Spirits, no way clogged or encumbered with Fleſh and Blood, and conſequently not ſubject to any irregular Motions or Appetites from within; and they ſtand continually in the Preſence of God (where he appears more immediately in the Brightneſs of his divine Majeſty and Glory) in a confirmed and irreverſible ſtate of Grace and Glory.

But Man is immerſed in, and joined to, mortal and frail Fleſh and Blood, as an eſſential Part of his Compoſition, and on that account ſubject to many irregular Paſſions and Appetites from within, beſides the many Temptations he is conſtantly expoſed to from without, by the Devil and the World: Nor is he, as yet, arrived to a confirmed and irreverſible State of either Grace or Glory; it is therefore impoſſible, morally ſpeaking, that he can perform the Will of God on Earth, in a mathematical Proportion, as it is performed by the Angels in Heaven, tho' he may come as near it as their different Natures, Abilities, and Circumſtances will allow; and that is, moſt cer-

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tainly, all that is designed by the Petition in the Lord's Prayer.

And now, my Brethren, what is the Result of this whole Discourse? Why here it is in short, namely, that we be all and each of us, in our several Stations and Degrees, very careful and cautious, how we give Credit to every new and unusual Spirit or Doctrine, that would endeavour to obtrude itself upon us for the Spirit of God, without a strict Trial and Examination, by the foregoing or some other equivalent Rules, how fair and specious soever the outward Appearance or Pretence may be; because the greater and more specious the outward Appearance or Pretence, the greater is the Danger of being deceived: That we be not tossed about with every vain Blast of Doctrine, having itching Ears, fond of Novelties and new-fangled Customs and Practices; but that, to the contrary, we steddily adhere to the plain, sober, and rational Precepts of Religion and Morality; and never give Ear to the vain and fantastical Flights of crazy-pated Enthusiasts.

Let us love God above and before all Things, and make the Love of ourselves the Rule of our Love to our Neighbour, so as never to do that to another, which we would not have another do to ourselves, in equal Circumstances. Let us be constant in performing all the Duties of publick and private Worship, sincerely endeavouring to mortify all our evil and corrupt Affections, and daily proceeding in all Virtue and Godliness of living; humbly and with a lively Faith relying on the Mercy of God, in and for the Sake of Christ Jesus our Lord, for the Pardon of our unavoidable Failings, Weaknesses, and Imperfections, upon our sincere Repentance. In a Word, let us visit the fatherless Children and Widows, and keep ourselves (as far as may be) unspotted from the World. This is the true, the ancient, and Catholick Religion of Christ: This is, as St. *James* calls it, *pure and undefiled*

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undefiled Religion before God and the Father. And in order to be truly inſtructed in, and ſufficiently exhorted to the Practice of this Religion, we need not go farther than the legal Aſſemblies of our own Church; and have no manner of Occaſion to frequent unlawful and unwarrantable Conventicles, or give Ear to ſchiſmatical, unauthoriſed, illegal Lay-preachers, to the great Scandal of the true reformed Proteſtant Religion, to the manifeſt expoſing of it to the Scorn and Reproach of its common and inveterate Enemies the Papiſts, to the diſtracting of the Minds of the People, and giving Occaſion of Offence to Men of weak Minds and Capacities; and finally, to the great Increaſe of Uncharitableneſs, and mutual Animoſities.

But above all, that we ſeriouſly apply ourſelves to a thorough Reformation and Amendment of our Lives and Converſations, ſo ſhall we (beſides the great Comfort and ineſtimable Advantage of it to ourſelves) take from theſe proud conceited Phariſees, all Occaſion and Pretence of glorying and boaſting againſt us, and leave them no manner of Plea or Excuſe for themſelves. There is nothing they glory and boaſt more in, than their own pretended outward Holineſs and Righteouſneſs, and the looſe and profligate Behaviour of too many among us. In this Vein they are immoderately proud and boaſting, moſt of their Diſcourſes being ſtuffed with Praiſes and Panegyricks on their own Righteouſneſs and Holineſs, which, by the way, is another ſhrewd Sign of the Falſeneſs of their Spirit; for every Spirit that is of God is humble, meek, and lowly in its own Eyes, does not vaunt itſelf, neither is it puffed up, but on all Occaſions both thinks and ſpeaks more meanly of itſelf than of others.

If we could be perſuaded to be ſo juſt to ourſelves, as to deprive them of this their Matter and Pretence of boaſting againſt us, by a thorough Reformation, we ſhould ſoon ſee them dwindle into nothing as a

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Society, and their Craft and Hypocriſy laid open to the View of the World.

As to their frequent and long Prayers, we know that the Scribes and Phariſees, among the *Jews*, far exceeded them both in the Number, Length, and Frequency of their Prayers; and yet our Saviour pronounced a Woe againſt them on this very Account; *Woe unto you Scribes and Phariſees, Hypocrites, for ye make long Prayers, and for a Pretence devour Widows Houſes:* And whether theſe our modern Scribes and Phariſees do not as cruel and hard-hearted Things to their Neighbours, when they can find an Advantage againſt them, I leave to God and their own Conſciences to determine. I ſpeak as to wiſe Men, conſider ye what I ſay; and may the great God of Heaven and Earth give both you and myſelf a right and ſober Judgment in all Things, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, to whom with the Father and Holy Spirit, three moſt glorious Perſons, and one infinite, eternal, and incomprehenſible Deity, be all Honour and Glory, Might, Majeſty, and Dominion, both now and thro' all Ages, World without End. *Amen.*

LET-

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LETTERS

Which paſſed between the

Rev. Mr. JOHN WESLY,

AND THE

AUTHOR.

LETTER I.

To Mr. JOHN WESLY.

'REV. SIR,

I RECEIVED the Favour of your printed Diſcourſe upon *Catholick Spirit* by Mr. *William Ruttledge*, and ſhould only thank you for the ſame, and not trouble either you or myſelf with this Addreſs, were it not that I am ſomewhat ſuſpicious, that you had a farther and more particular View, than merely making a Preſent, in preſenting me with that Diſcourſe rather than any other of your printed Pamphlets or Sermons.

I SHALL very candidly acquaint you with the Grounds of my Suſpicion: Some time ago I took Occaſion to preach to the Flock then (in the Abſence of the

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the Rector) under my Care, upon 1 *John* iv. 1. one Mr. *Langſton*, a Lay-preacher of your Society, or (as I remember when you preached here you called it) of your Little Church, and ſome other Members of your Society being preſent, my Text naturally led me to lay down ſome Rules for the Trial of Spirits; and among others I inſiſted on this, that any Perſon who pretended to an extraordinary and immediate Spirit of Inſpiration or Revelation, without proving his Pretenſions by ſuch Credentials, as the Prophets in the Old, or the Apoſtles and other inſpired Perſons in the New Teſtament, proved their Pretenſions by, that is, by real and undoubted Miracles, might juſtly be deemed either a deluded Enthuſiaſt, or an arrant Cheat and Impoſtor.

Mr. *Langſton*, I ſuppoſe, was offended at this and ſome other Parts of the Diſcourſe, imagining (and I confeſs he was not out in his Imagination) that it concerned, or was particularly levelled at himſelf: Whereupon (thinking, I ſuppoſe, to engage me in a Controverſy with him) he wrote me a Letter, of which I did not think it worth my while to take any Notice; becauſe, however that venerable Preacher may, either in his own, or the Opinion of others, be inſpired, yet when he wrote that Letter, either he was not under the Influences of the Spirit, or the Spirit forgot to direct him to write common Senſe, Orthography, or *Engliſh*. Now I think it not unlikely that Mr. *Langſton*, ſince your Arrival, may have acquainted you with this Affair, and that your ſending me your Diſcourſe upon *Catholick Spirit* (wherein you endeavour to prove, that Chriſtians ought not to inquire into each others Opinions in Religion, or their different Modes of Worſhip) was a genteel and tacit way of reproving me, for making any Inquiry into the religious Principles of the Methodiſts, for which I am very far from finding any Fault with you, as I think it incumbent on every Chriſtian, if he believes his Brother

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ther to be in an Error, to endeavour, as far as he is able, or has an Opportunity, to convince him of his Error, in order to his recanting, or forſaking of it.

HAVING thus candidly and freely acquainted you with the Grounds of my Suſpicion, I ſhall now proceed, with the ſame Freedom and Candour, to acquaint you with the Motives that induced me to preach that Sermon, and to give you my Opinion upon ſuch Parts of your Diſcourſe upon *Catholick Spirit*, as I conceive were deſigned by you as a Reproof of what I therein ſpoke againſt ſome of your Principles as a Methodiſt.

IN ſeveral Converſations which I have at ſeveral Times had with ſome Members of your Society, I found them always ſtrenuouſly inſiſting upon the extraordinary and immediate Inſpirations of the Holy Ghoſt, without being ever able to convince them of the Difference between the extraordinary and immediate, and the ordinary and mediate Influences of that bleſſed Spirit: And particularly, diſcourſing at a certain Time with one Mr. *B——m*, a Member of your Society, he did not ſcruple to affirm, that he verily believed, the aforeſaid *L——n* was as much inſpired as ever the great Apoſtle St. *Paul* was; and I was credibly informed by ſome, who went out of Curioſity to hear the ſame *L——n* preach in this Town, (and by others, who often heard him at other Times, and in other Places, expreſs the ſame) that he affirmed himſelf to be as righteous and as free from Sin as ever Jeſus Chriſt was, and that it was impoſſible he could commit any Sin, becauſe the Spirit of God dwelt bodily in him. Theſe, Sir, I did, and ſtill do, conceive to have been blaſphemous Expreſſions, for which, if he was guilty, he deſerved to be puniſhed with the utmoſt Rigour of Law: For I challenge Antichriſt himſelf, whoever he be, or whenſoever he ſhall appear, to be guilty of more ſtaring and capital Blaſphemy,

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phemy, than equalling himſelf with the Son of God for Righteouſneſs, and Freedom from Sin.

BEING therefore informed that theſe blaſphemous Words were ſpoke in the hearing of ſome of the Flock, that, in the Abſence of the Rector of the Pariſh, were under my Care, I thought I could not diſcharge my Duty to the Flock, nor anſwer the Truſt repoſed in me by their Rector, without warning them to be cautious how they gave Credit to ſuch a lying deceitful Spirit, as Mr. *L——n* muſt needs have been poſſeſſed with, how great and ſpecious ſoever its outward Appearance of Piety and Devotion might be; for I conceived, that a Tree which produced ſuch blaſphemous Fruit could never be of God's planting.

I COME now to give you my Opinion of your Diſcourſe upon *Catholick Spirit*, which I have read more than once with all the Impartiality and Attention I was Maſter of; and although I have no Exception to your earneſt Recommendation of a Catholick Spirit of Love among Chriſtians; yet give me Leave, Sir, without Offence, to affirm, that ſome Parts of it ſeem to me to be very unwarrantable, and abſolutely inconſiſtent with that very Catholick Spirit of Love which you ſo earneſtly, ſo pathetically, and indeed ſo piouſly recommend.

YOUR Text is taken from 2 *Kings* x. 15. and conſiſts of *Jehu*'s Queſtion to *Jehonadab*, *Is your Heart right, as my Heart with thy Heart?* &c. And your firſt Remark upon your Text is, that [q] *Jehu* makes no Inquiry into *Jehonadab*'s Opinions, though he held ſome that were uncommon, and peculiar to himſelf: And it does not appear, you ſay, that *Jehu* concerned himſelf at all about theſe Things, but ſuffered *Jehonadab* to abound in his own Senſe; and neither of them appears to have given the other the leaſt Diſturbance concerning each other's Opinions.

YOUR

[q] Pag. 6 and 7.

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YOUR ſecond [r] Obſervation, drawn from your Text, is, that there is no Inquiry made into *Jehonadab*'s Mode or Manner of Worſhip, though it is highly probable, you ſay, there was a wide Difference between them in this Reſpect; *Jehonadab*, in all Probability, worſhipping at *Jeruſalem*, and *Jehu* worſhipping at *Dan* and *Bethel*, &c.

FROM theſe Obſervations, I do ſuppoſe that your Deſign was to infer, that neither ought Chriſtians (any more than *Jehu* did) to make any Inquiry into each others religious Opinions, or different Modes of Worſhip, but that every one ſhould be ſuffered to abound in his own Senſe, and to worſhip God in his own way; and that your preſenting me with this Diſcourſe was with a Deſign to let me know, that I had no Right to inquire into the religious Principles of the Methodiſts, but ſhould have permitted them to abound in their own Senſe, without giving them any Diſturbance about it.

THAT this was your Deſign in that Diſcourſe, and that it was probably on this Account alone that you made me a Preſent of that Diſcourſe, rather than any other of your printed Sermons or Pamphlets, ſeems pretty evident from what you farther advance, and by the Inſtances you produce; for upon theſe Words of your Text, *If it be, give me your Hand*, you diſcourſe [t] thus, "I do not mean (ſay you) be "of my Opinion, you need not, *&c.* keep your "own Opinion and I will keep mine, and that as "ſteadily as ever; you need not even deſire to come "over to me, I do not deſire to diſpute about theſe "Things, nor to hear one Word about them, *&c.* "Let all Opinions alone on *one Side and the other*."

AND as to the Difference between the Church and the Preſbyterians about Church Government, and the Quakers about Baptiſm and the Lord's Supper, and the Anabaptiſts about Infant Baptiſm, of all theſe Differences

[r] Pag. 9. [t] Pag. 17.

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Differences you make nothing at all; you have no Deſire, you ſay, to diſpute with any of them, no not for a ſingle Moment; and you would have all theſe ſmall Matters, for ſo you are pleaſed to call them, laid aſide, and never come in ſight.

THAT ſuch Propoſitions as theſe ſhould be advanced by a Clergyman of the Church of *England*, who bound himſelf to God and the Church, at his Ordination, under the moſt ſolemn Vows and Obligations, to be always ready, with all Diligence, to baniſh and drive away all ſtrange and erroneous Doctrines and Opinions from his Flock, is to me very amazing; and how he can anſwer or fulfil theſe Obligations, without enquiring into, or examining the Opinions of all that differ from the Opinions and Mode of Worſhip eſtabliſhed in that Church wherein he was ordained, and entruſted with the Cure of Souls, is paſt my Capacity to comprehend. But to return to your Diſcourſe upon *Catholick Spirit*.

I HUMBLY conceive, that your Text affords no manner of Countenance or Foundation, for either of the Obſervations which you draw from it: For tho' it be not expreſly mentioned in the Text, that *Jehu* enquired into *Jehonadab*'s Opinions, yet it may be implied in the Queſtion which he propoſed to him, *Is thy Heart right?* &c. which Queſtion may well bear this Senſe, 'Are you of the ſame religious Principles 'with me?' But ſuppoſe it was neither expreſſed nor implied (as indeed I am of Opinion it was neither the one or the other, for it was the leaſt of *Jehu*'s Concern to trouble his Head about *Jehonadab*'s religious Sentiments, or his manner of Worſhip, being a mere Politician and Latitudinarian, with reſpect to theſe Things) ſuppoſe all this, I ſay, how does it follow that Chriſtians ought not to enquire into each others religious Sentiments? Or who made the Principles, the Actions, or Conduct of *Jehu* a Rule for Chriſtians to walk by? For although God made Uſe of him as an

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an Inſtrument to puniſh the Houſe of *Ahab*, and to deſtroy the Worſhippers of *Baal* out of *Iſrael*, yet he was, in all other Reſpects, a very bad Man; and he that will undertake to juſtify all his Actions and Proceedings, will find it a very hard Taſk to reconcile moſt of them to the ſtrict Rules of Chriſtian Morality.

The plain Meaning therefore, of *Jehu*'s Queſtion to *Jehonadab*, ſeems to me to be no more than this: *Jehu*, according to his uſual Cuſtom, was driving furiouſly in his Chariot towards *Samaria*, in order to deſtroy all that yet remained of the Family of *Ahab*, and by an hypocritical Scheme, not to be juſtified by the Principles of Chriſtian Morality, to bring all the Worſhippers of *Baal* to one Place, in order to deſtroy them.

In his way he meets with *Jehonadab* the Son of *Rechab*, and being deſirous to know his Opinion, and to have his Approbation of what he had hitherto done, and was farther reſolved to do, he propoſes the Queſtion to him which you have choſe for your Text, *Is thy Heart right?* &c. That is, do you, in your Opinion and Judgment, approve of and conſent to what I have hitherto done, and am ſtill reſolved, and now actually going to do, towards deſtroying the idolatrous Houſe of *Ahab*, according to the Word of *Elijah* the Man of God; and upon *Jehonadab*'s anſwering in the Affirmative, he gives him his Hand, takes him up into his Chariot, deſiring him to come and be an Eye-witneſs of his Zeal for the Lord.

But though Zeal for the Lord was the outward Pretence, yet in Reality *Jehu*'s principal View and Deſign was, to ſecure the Crown the more effectually to his own Family, by an entire Eradication of the Poſterity of *Ahab*, and by rooting out and deſtroying all the Worſhippers of *Baal*, who (if not out of Gratitude, yet upon a Principle of Self-intereſt) muſt have been firmly attached to the Royal Family of *Ahab*, their great Patron and Supporter.

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THAT this was really the Caſe with *Jehu*, ſeems very plain, from his continuing ſtill in the Sin of *Jeroboam* the Son of *Nebat*, notwithſtanding all his boaſted Zeal for the Lord. This being all that can poſſibly be gathered from *Jehu*'s Queſtion to *Jehonadab*, I know no Rule of Logick that can from thence infer, that Chriſtians ought not to enquire into each other's religious Principles, or their different Modes and Forms of Worſhip.

IN a Word, Sir, your Propoſitions and Obſervations receive no more Countenance from, and have no more Foundation in your Text, than in the firſt Chapter of *Geneſis*.

THAT there are and will be Differences in Religion, and conſequently in Modes of Worſhip, to the End of the World, is very probable; and that every one muſt, or ought to be, perſuaded in his own Mind, and act and walk according to the Light which he has; and that no Creature has Power to force or conſtrain another to walk by his Rule, all this I acknowledge (as you [t] obſerve) to be very true. But then, Sir, tho' we may not force or conſtrain, may we not perſuade, adviſe, and exhort our Brother to forſake an erroneous or an evil way of thinking or believing? And if he will not be perſuaded to do ſo, may we not, (and is it not our indiſpenſible Duty to) reject ſuch an one, that is, have no Fellowſhip with him in either? May we not, after private Admonition, if he will not be reformed thereby, delate [u] ſuch an one to the Church, according to our Saviour's own Directions; and if he will not hear, that is, be adviſed by the Church, but will ſtill continue obſtinate and incorrigible, are we not warranted, by the expreſs Words of our Lord, to look upon him, after he is duly excommunicated, according to the Rules of the Goſpel, as no better than an Heathen or a Publican, that is, the worſt of Sinners?

Does

[t] Pag. 11. [u] Matth. xviii. 17.

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Does not St. *Paul* desire *Titus* [w] to reject, that is, to excommunicate a Man that is an Heretick, because such an one is perverted, and condemned of himself; not that no Man is an Heretick but he that acts against Conscience; (as some have strangely imagined) for then neither *Titus* nor any other could know who was, or who was not an Heretick; because no Man could tell whether he acted against Conscience or not, and all Hereticks would be Hypocrites, which is by no Means supposeable; for an Heretick may be very sincere, and take his heretical Opinion for catholick Truth. But the Meaning [x] of being condemned of himself is, that by his obstinate and wilful Adherence to his false Opinion, he brings the Censure of the Church upon himself, and so consequently condemns himself before the actual Denunciation of the Censures upon him.

You acknowledge [y] the Government of the Church by Bishops, as an Order superior to Presbyters, to be scriptural and apostolical; but if another thinks the Presbyterian or Independant Form to be better, you advise him to think so still, and you will, you say, neither desire nor endeavour to bring him to your own way of thinking; and you expressly allow the Quakers to reject Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and you desire to have no Dispute with them about such Trifles, and that the Questions about them may NEVER come in Sight.

And do you, Sir, in good earnest think it a Matter indifferent, whether the Church be under a Form of Government of divine (for so the episcopal Form must be, if it be, as you acknowledge, both scriptural and apostolical) or under an human Form, never heard of in the Church of God before the Days of *John Calvin?* Are Heresies and Schisms, which St. *Paul* [z] reckons among the Works of the Flesh, Sins

[w] Tit. iii. 10. [x] See Dr. *Hammond* on the Text. [y] Pag. 17. [z] Gal. v. 20.

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of ſo ſlight and trivial a Nature, that you will have no Diſpute with any one about them? And will you not endeavour to reſcue your Brother from ſuch capital Sins, which, if we may believe St. *Paul*, ſhut the Gates of Heaven againſt Men, as effectually as Murder or Adultery? How then is this any way conſiſtent with that catholick Spirit of Love, which in your Sermon you do ſo earneſtly recommend?

All Errors or Deviations from the Truth are more or leſs ſinful, in Proportion to the Importance of the Truth that is deviated from, or the Vincibleneſs or Invincibleneſs of the Ignorance from whence ſuch Error or Deviation proceeds. And ſince of two contradictory Opinions, one muſt of Neceſſity be true and the other falſe, and that which ever of the two a Man holds or maintains, he muſt hold it as true, for no Man can hold or maintain a falſe Opinion *ſub modo*, that is, believing it to be falſe, he muſt conſequently believe the contradictory Opinion, to that which he holds, to be falſe; and can he, conſiſtently with that Love which he ought to have for his Brother, ſuffer Sin upon him, without endeavouring to reform him, according to the beſt of his Power, and the Opportunity which God ſhall afford him?

If, for Inſtance, I believe Baptiſm and the Lord's Supper to be ſtanding Ordinances of the Goſpel, and neceſſary Means (I mean in the ordinary way) of Salvation, and conſequently of perpetual Obligation, and that a Quaker (as he actually does) denies all this, and conſequently rejects and diſuſes theſe Ordinances, muſt I not believe this to be a very great Sin in him, proportionably to the Vincibleneſs or Invincibleneſs of his Ignorance; and ſhall I deſire him to lay aſide all Queſtions about them? How then can I poſſibly love him, or wiſh well to his Soul, if I do not endeavour to convince him of his Error, and the ſinfulneſs of it, in order to his renouncing and forſaking of it? And how

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can I do this, without arguing againſt his Error, and giving him ſome Diſturbance about it?

THIS palpable Indifference of yours, as to oppoſite Opinions in Religion, is, I ſuppoſe, the Reſult and Effect of that Maxim which you and your Brother laid down to yourſelves, when ye firſt undertook the Propagation of Methodiſm in *London*; for among the four Maxims, which, in your *Plain Account of the People called Methodiſts*, pag. 4. you ſay, ye laid down to yourſelves as a Rule, which you intended to go by, the very firſt is, that Orthodoxy, or right Opinions, is but a very ſlender Part of Religion at beſt, if it may be allowed to be any Part at all of it.

I AM now, Sir, convinced of the Truth of what I hitherto only ſuſpected, namely, that notwithſtanding all its outward Show of Piety and Devotion, there was ſome hidden Myſtery, very dangerous to Religion, at the Bottom of Methodiſm: For I am really of Opinion, there hardly can be a more dangerous Maxim than that which you and your Brother laid down to yourſelves, as a Rule for the Propagation of it; for, according to this bleſſed Maxim, it is but a very ſlender, if it be any Part at all of Religion, to have a right Opinion of the Divinity and Eternity of the Son of God, againſt *Arrius*; of the Unity of his Perſon, againſt *Neſtorius*; or the Diſtinction of his two Natures, the human and divine, againſt *Eutyches*: And it muſt be a Matter of very little Importance to Religion, which Side of the Queſtion one holds, in any or all the above Caſes, if it be true, that Orthodoxy, or true Opinions be at the very beſt but a ſlender, if it may be allowed to be any, Part at all of Religion.

IN one Word, Sir, this Maxim, in my Opinion, ſtrikes at the Root of all Religion and of Faith; it makes it a Matter quite indifferent, what Opinion a Man holds concerning any one Article of the Creed,

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which is only a right way of believing Facts plainly revealed in Scripture: It makes St. *Paul*'s Charge to *Timothy*, [a] to *hold fast the Form of sound Words*, which he had heard from him, of little or no Consequence; and makes the Advice of St *Jude*, [b] to *contend earnestly for the Faith that was once delivered to the Saints*, very impertinent; and, to conclude all, it opens a wide Gap to that Latitudinarianism and Indifference, as to Points of Speculation, which you yourself, in the Close of your Discourse upon *Catholick Spirit*, (how consistently with this Maxim let the World judge) very justly and truly call the Curse of Heaven, and the Spawn of Hell.

I am, Sir, *&c.*

J. C.

LETTER II.

Mr. WESLEY'S Answer.

Rev. Sir,

I AM obliged to you for the Openness and Candour with which you write, and will endeavour to follow the Pattern which you have set me.

I DID not know of *John Langston*'s Affair, till you gave me an Account of it: He is no Preacher allowed of by me; I do not believe that ever God called him to it; neither do I approve his Conduct with regard to you; I fear he is, or at least was, a real Enthusiast: The same Character, I fear, may be justly given to poor Mr. *B——m*. I sent you that Sermon with no particular View, but as a Testimony of Love to a Fellow Labourer in the Gospel.

FROM

[a] 2 Tim. i. 13. [b] Jude, ver. 3.

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FROM the Text of that Sermon I do not infer, that Chriſtians ſhould not inquire into each others Opinions: Indeed from the Text I infer nothing; I uſe it to illuſtrate, not to prove. I am very ſenſible *Jehu* had more Regard to State Policy than to Religion, p. 15. and have no Objection to the very fair Explication you have made of his Words: Accordingly I ſay, p. 13. I do not mean what *Jehu* implied therein, but what a Follower of Chriſt ſhould underſtand by it, when he propoſes it to any of his Brethren; of theſe only I ſpeak. My general Propoſition, you may pleaſe to remember, was this, p. 5. "All the Children of God may unite in Love, notwithſtanding their Differences in Opinion, or Modes of Worſhip." From this Perſuaſion, when I meet with any, whom I have Reaſon to believe to be Children of God, I do not aſk of him (never at our firſt Meeting, ſeldom till we are better acquainted) Do you agree with me in Opinion or Modes of Worſhip, particularly with regard to Church Government, Baptiſm and the Lord's Supper? I let theſe ſtand by, till we begin to know and confirm our Love to each other; then may come a more convenient Seaſon for Controverſy: My only Queſtion at preſent is, *Is thy Heart right with my Heart?* &c.

AT preſent, I ſay, keep your own Opinion, p. 13. I mine; I do not deſire you to diſpute theſe Points; whether we ſhall diſpute them hereafter, is another Queſtion; perhaps we may, perhaps we may not; this will depend on a great Variety of Circumſtances, particularly on a Probability of Succeſs; for I am determined never to diſpute at all, if I have no Hopes of convincing my Opponent.

As to my own Judgment, I ſtill believe the epiſcopal Form of Church Government to be both ſcriptural and apoſtolical, I mean, well agreeing with the Practice and Writings of the Apoſtles; but that it is preſcribed in Scripture I do not believe: This Opi-

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nion, which I once heartily eſpouſed, I have been heartily aſhamed of, ever ſince I read Dr. *Stillingfleet's Irenicum*; I think he has unanſwerably proved, that neither Chriſt or his Apoſtles preſcribed any particular Form of Church Government, and that the Plea for the Divine Right of Epiſcopacy was never heard of in the primitive Church.

But were it otherwiſe, I would ſtill call theſe ſmaller Matters than the Love of God and Mankind, p. 18. And could any Man anſwer theſe Queſtions, Doſt thou believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, God over all, bleſſed for evermore? (which indeed no Arrian, Semi-Arrian, or Socinian can do) Is God the Center of thy Soul? Art thou more afraid of offending God than of Death or Hell? p. 15. (which no wicked Man can poſſibly do, none that is not a real Child of God) if, I ſay, any Man could anſwer theſe Queſtions in the Affirmative, I would gladly give him my Hand.

This is certainly a Principle held by thoſe that are in Deriſion called Methodiſts, and to whom a Popiſh Prieſt in *Dublin* gave the ſtill more unmeaning Title of *Swaddlers*; they all deſire to be of a catholic Spirit, meaning thereby, not an Indifference to all Opinions, not an Indifference as to Modes of Worſhip, this they know to be quite another Thing; Love, they judge, gives a Title this Character, catholick Love is catholick Spirit, p. 25.

As to Hereſy and Schiſm, I cannot find one Text in Scripture where they are taken in the modern Senſe. I remember no one Scripture where Hereſy ſignifies Error in Opinion, whether fundamental or not; nor any where Schiſm ſignifies Separation from the Church, either with or without Cauſe. I wiſh, Sir, you would re-conſider this Point, and review the Scriptures where theſe Terms occur.

But I would take ſome Pains to recover a Man from Error, and reconcile him to our Church, I mean the Church of *England*, from which I do not ſeparate yet,

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yet, and probably never ſhall: The little Church, in the vulgar Senſe, which I occaſionally mentioned at *Hollymount*, is that wherein I read Prayers, preach, and adminiſter the Sacrament, every *Sunday* when I am in *London*.

But I would take much more Pains to recover a Man from Sin; a Man who lives and dies in Error, or in Diſſent from our Church, may yet be ſaved; but a Man who lives and dies in Sin muſt periſh. Oh! Sir, let us lend our main Force againſt this, againſt all Sin, both in ourſelves and thoſe that hear us. I would to God we could all agree in Opinion and outward Worſhip; but if that cannot be, may we not agree in Holineſs? May we not all agree in being holy, as he that has called us is holy, in Heart and Converſation. This is the great Deſire of,

Reverend Sir,

Your, *&c.*

J. W.

P. S. Perhaps I have not ſpoke diſtinctly enough on one Point. Orthodoxy, I ſay, or right Opinion, is but a ſlender Part of Religion at beſt, and ſometimes no Part at all; I mean, if a Man be a Child of God, holy in Heart and Life, his right Opinions are but the ſmalleſt Part of his Religion: If a Man be a Child of the Devil, his right Opinions are no Part of Religion, they cannot be; for he that does the Works of the Devil has no Religion at all.

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LETTER III.

A Second Letter to Mr. WESLY.

Rev. Sir,

I RECEIVED your Letter, dated at *Caſtlebar* the 3d inſtant, and am very glad to find you do not approve of Mr. *L——n* as a Preacher, to which Office, to be ſure, he has no more Call from God than he has from Man.

BUT give me Leave, Sir, without Offence, to aſk by what Authority you take upon yourſelf to approve or diſapprove of Preachers, or who gave you any ſuch Authority? But above all, let me conjure you to tell me by what (more than pontifical Authority) do you take upon yourſelf to ſettle Lay-preachers within certain Bounds and Diſtricts, in open Defiance to the twenty-third Article of that Church, from which, you ſay, you have not as yet ſeparated, and probably (but not certainly) never ſhall. Though, in my humble Opinion, you can hardly make a greater Separation from her, than by aſſuming, within the Bounds and Limits of her Juriſdiction, a Liberty to ſettle and ſend forth Lay-preachers into all Parts of *England* and *Ireland*, to gather Diſciples after you, to form them into Societies, under certain Rules of Government and Diſcipline of your own framing, not only without the Conſent and Approbation of the chief Governors in either Church, either had or deſired, (though at your Ordination you vowed all due Submiſſion and Obedience to them) but in direct Oppoſition to them all.

As to Lay-preachers, I pray you will conſider, that the ſeven firſt Deacons, though they were good Men and full of the Holy Ghoſt, were not allowed to execute ſo mean an Office as taking Care of the Poor, and diſtributing the Alms of the Faithful among them (which was their firſt and original Office) until they

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they were publickly ordained by the Hands of the Apoſtles. And it is very remarkable, that tho' *Barnabas* and *Paul* were ſome Time before called to be ſupernumerary Apoſtles at large, yet when it pleaſed the Holy Ghoſt to employ them in a peculiar and particular Miniſtry, the ſame Holy Spirit ordered them to be ordained for that Miniſtry, by the Impoſition of the Hands of the Governors of the Church at *Antioch*, *Acts* xiii. 2, 3. And how you came by a Power to grant a Privilege, which was not even allowed to *Paul* and *Barnabas*, is what, I think, imports you very much to take into your ſerious Conſideration.

I AM glad you acknowledge Mr. *L——n* and Mr. *B——m* to be, or at leaſt to have been, real Enthuſiaſts, and could wiſh you did ſeriouſly reflect, that if among the few Proſelytes which your Doctrine and Diſcipline has made, in this remote Corner of the Kingdom, there be two confeſſed (and it is very probable, if not certain, that there are many more than are confeſſed) Enthuſiaſts, what vaſt Numbers of Enthuſiaſts (that is, in Reality, of religious Madmen) your Doctrine and Diſcipline has made in all other Parts of *England* and *Ireland*, and that the Guilt of all the Blaſphemies which theſe Madmen ſhall, at any time in their frantick Fits, be guilty of, will be laid to your Charge, at leaſt as an Acceſſory, at the great Day of Account.

I REMEMBER to have read ſome Years ago a Pamphlet wrote by an anonymous Author of your Society, wherein he made a Collection of all the Texts in the New Teſtament where there is any mention made of the Spirit, or its Influences, either ordinary or extraordinary; of all which he does promiſcuouſly, without any Diſtinction or Reſervation, affirm, that every Chriſtian has a Right to expect them, and that whoever has them not is no Child of God, but a mere Reprobate.

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Now when ſuch Doctrine as this is inculcated upon poor ignorant Creatures, who have the leaſt Spark of natural Enthuſiaſm in their Tempers or Conſtitutions, (and there are but few who have not ſome little Spark of it) I appeal to your own Judgment, to what a Height this Fever of the Mind (for in Reality natural Enthuſiaſm is nothing elſe) may be raiſed and fomented, by ſuch outward Incentives and Applications; and what a horrid Affront it muſt be to the Holy Ghoſt, to have all the wild Imaginations of ſuch hot-headed Enthuſiaſts fathered upon him.

As to Mr. *L——n*'s Behaviour with reſpect to me, it was not worth your Notice; I rather expected ſome Marks of your Reſentment againſt his Blaſphemy, in equalling himſelf to the Son of God for Righteouſneſs, and his pretending to a State of Impeccability, on account of his being (in his own Imagination) bodily poſſeſſed with the Holy Ghoſt, of which, to my great Surprize, you take no manner of Notice, either by confeſſing or denying the Charge; for either he is guilty of the Charge, or not; if he be, I humbly conceive that you ought rather to have expreſſed your Diſapprobation of the Blaſphemy, than of his Behaviour to me, were it a thouſand times more irregular than it was; but if he be not guilty, then why is not the Charge denied, and he not ſuffered to lie under the Imputation of it; by ſaying nothing either one way or another about it, and giving too much room to conclude him guilty, from your profound Silence upon that Head?

From the Text of your Sermon, you ſay, you infer not, that Chriſtians ſhould not enquire into each others Opinions in Religion; nay, it ſeems you infer nothing at all from it, and then I muſt needs greatly admire to what purpoſe you placed it in the Front of your Sermon; if you deſigned to infer nothing at all from it, what Buſineſs had it there? Or why do you, in

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in the Introduction [c] to your following Diſcourſe, tell your Audience, that your Text contained Matter very well worth the ſerious Imitation and Attention of every Chriſtian? And how this was poſſible, if nothing at all was to be inferred from it, I own, for my Part, I cannot conceive.

But you uſed it, you ſay, to illuſtrate, not to prove. This is ſtill more unaccountable; for Preachers generally do, or at leaſt I am ſure ought, to take their Matter from their Text, and to illuſtrate that Matter by other parallel Texts of Scripture: But notwithſtanding all you do now, or indeed can ſay to the contrary, it ſeems to me very evidently plain, from the two firſt Obſervations which you draw from your Text, that your real Deſign was to prove, not to illuſtrate; your Obſervations were, that *Jehu* did not enquire into *Jehonadab*'s Principles in Religion, or his Manner of Worſhip. Now in the Name of common Ingenuity, what other poſſible View could you have in making theſe two Obſervations on your Text, than thereby to prove, that Chriſtians ſhould not enquire into each others religious Principles, or their Modes of Worſhip? For was not *Jehu*'s not enquiring into *Jehonadab*'s Principles, *&c.* the Matter which you told your Audience was ſo well worth their ſerious Imitation and Attention? And therefore was it not moſt plainly your Deſign to perſuade your Audience, that they ought not to enquire into each others Principles, any more than *Jehu* enquired into *Jehonadab*'s?

But ſtill, you ſay, your Deſign was not to ſhew what *Jehu* meant by the Queſtion, but what a Child of God means, or is underſtood to mean by it, when he propoſes it to his Brother.

Let us then ſuppoſe that this was really your Deſign, what, in your Opinion, ſhould a Child of God mean by it, when he propoſes it to his Brother? Do you not think he ought not thereby to intend any Enquiry

[a] Page 6.

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quiry into his religious Principles, or the Mode or Manner of his Worſhip? And does it not, from the Paſſages which I quoted from your Sermon in my former Letter, appear that you think he ought not?

But pray, Sir, why may not a Child of God, by this Queſtion, *Is your Heart right?* &c. Why, I ſay, may he not mean, deſign, and intend to enquire and know whether his Brother has the ſame true Principles of Religion as he has himſelf? Is there any thing in ſuch a Deſign inconſiſtent with the Queſtion, or in the Queſtion with the Deſign? Nay, to the contrary, what can be more natural for a Child of God than by this Queſtion, *Is your Heart right?* &c. to mean, are you of the ſame Opinion with me in Matters of Religion, and do you worſhip God after the ſame manner that I do?

In one Word, when a true Follower of Chriſt propoſes ſuch a Queſtion to his Brother, I humbly conceive that he may very naturally and truly be underſtood to mean, Whether he is a true Believer? Whether his Principles in Religion be ſound and orthodox? He may, I ſay, be as well preſumed to mean this, as any of thoſe Particulars which, you ſay, he does or ought to mean by it.

And this is apparent from the very firſt Thing which you acknowledge to be implied in the Queſtion, when propoſed by a Child of God to his Brother, "Doſt thou believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, God "over all, bleſſed for evermore? which, you ſay, no "Arrian, Semi-Arrian, or Socinian can anſwer in the "Affirmative:" And therefore this Queſtion evidently implies a Deſire in the Propoſer to know whether he to whom it is propoſed believes in Chriſt as God, as the Catholick Church and as every true Follower of Chriſt ought to do; or as a Creature, as the Arrians, Semi-Arrians, and Socinians do, and believe him to be; and conſequently implies an Enquiry into his religious Principles or Sentiments.

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HAD you told us in your Sermon, that you only poſtponed enquiring into your Brother's religious Principles, 'till ye were better acquainted, and had confirmed your Loves to each other, I could have no room to except againſt it; but as you affirmed in general Terms, without any ſuch Reſervation expreſſed, that you deſired to have no Diſpute with any one about their religious Principles, and that particularly with regard to the Quakers denying Baptiſm and the Lord's Supper, you diſcourſe in the following Manner, pag. 18. of your Sermon: "My Sentiment is, ſay "you, that I ought not to forbid Water wherein "Perſons are baptized, and that I ought to eat Bread "and drink Wine in Memory of my dying Maſter; "but if you (meaning a Quaker) are not convinced "of this, act according to the Light you have, I "have no Deſire to diſpute with you one Moment "about them, let all theſe SMALLER Matters ſtand "aſide, let them NEVER (it is your own expreſs "Term) come in ſight."

Now, Sir, conſidering how very ſlightly and ſuperficially you here ſpeak of the two venerable and awful Myſteries of the Chriſtian Religion, the Badges of our Profeſſion and the Means of Grace, and how very little you ſeem to think of the indiſpenſible Obligation that lies on all Chriſtians to uſe them, as poſitive Inſtitutions and Commands of their divine Lord and Maſter: Conſidering, I ſay, all this, together with many other the like Expreſſions throughout that whole Sermon, I think I had, and ſtill have, very good Grounds to conclude, that you are very indifferent as to any Man's Principles in Religion, and that you thereby open a wide Gap to a pernicious Latitudinarianiſm in Speculation and Opinion, which you yourſelf (p. 22. of your Sermon) very juſtly and truly call the Curſe of Heaven, and the Spawn of Hell.

AND here I cannot but obſerve, how very cautiouſly and dubiouſly you ſpeak in your Letter, even when

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when you are endeavouring to clear yourſelf of the Imputation of Indifference as to all Opinions, though all your Endeavours are only ſo many Proteſtations againſt plain Facts; and I may juſtly ſay, *Quid Verba audiam cum facta Videam:* For after all, it is only a peradventure you may, and peradventure you may not, even after a thorough Acquaintance and Confirmation of mutual Love, diſpute with any one about his religious Opinions, though never ſo contrary or oppoſite to your own: This, you ſay, will depend upon a Variety of Circumſtances, particularly upon the Probability of Succeſs, being reſolved, you ſay, never to diſpute at all, until you have ſome Hopes of convincing your Opponent.

THIS, Sir, very much reſembles the Reſolution of the Man, who wiſely reſolved never to go into the Water till he had learned to ſwim; but as it was impoſſible he could learn to ſwim until he went into the Water, ſo I am at a Loſs to know, how you can have any Hopes of convincing an Opponent, till you firſt reaſon or argue, which is all that is meant by diſputing, with him: And though I grant that the Hopes of Succeſs are a great Encouragement, yet I do not think the want of them can cancel the Obligation we lye under, to uſe our beſt Endeavours to recover our Brother from a dangerous Error: We are, I conceive, to do our own Duty, and to leave the Succeſs to God, who will accept our Labour of Love towards our Brother, not according to the Succeſs, but according to the Charity and Sincerity of our Intentions.

As to the Government of the Church by Biſhops, though it be, you ſay, your Judgment that it is both ſcriptural and apoſtolical, yet that it is preſcribed in Scripture, you ſay, you do not believe. Sir, I muſt ſay that this Diſtinction of yours, and the Difference you make between being ſcriptural and apoſtolical, and being preſcribed in Scripture, is as nice and ſubtle, as ever was made Uſe of upon a Pinch by any Popiſh

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Popiſh Schoolman: Nay, it is a Diſtinction without any manner of Difference; for if the epiſcopal Form was that which the Apoſtles ſettled, in all the Churches which they planted, and which they recommended in their Writings, (and if it was not ſo, how could it be agreeable to their Practice and Writings, which, you ſay, is what you mean by its being ſcriptural and apoſtolical?) I think it plain to Evidence and Demonſtration, that this is equivalent to, and the ſame thing as, being preſcribed in Scripture; and I believe every Man of common Senſe and Reaſon will be of the ſame Opinion.

But, it ſeems, though you were once a zealous Aſſertor of the ſcriptural Preſcription of Epiſcopacy, yet now you are heartily aſhamed of that Opinion, ever ſince you read Dr. *Stillingfleet*'s *Irenicum*, wherein you think he has unanſwerably proved, that neither Chriſt nor his Apoſtles eſtabliſhed any particular Form of Church Government, and that the Plea for the divine Right of Epiſcopacy, was never heard of in the primitive Church.

Sir, had you thoroughly conſidered and weighed the Grounds of the Opinion which, you ſay, you once zealouſly aſſerted, you ought rather to be heartily aſhamed of quitting it, upon ſo weak a Pretence as reading Dr. *Stillingfleet*'s *Irenicum*. For if my Memory does not fail, (for I have not the Book, and there are many Years paſt ſince I read it) the Doctor does not, nor indeed could he with any Colour of Truth, affirm, that neither Chriſt nor his Apoſtles eſtabliſhed any particular Form of Church Government; for ſure they left the Church under ſome Form of Government, whatever it was; but his main Deſign was to prove, that they ſettled no particular Form that was unalterable: He confeſſes, that the epiſcopal was the Form under which the Apoſtles left the Churches, and only contends that they left it as a Form

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Form that might be changed, according to the difference of Time and Place.

But be that as it will, you ought to have considered, that there have been other Divines as learned and judicious as the Doctor, who have taken upon them to prove the direct contrary by irrefragable Arguments; particularly Mr. *Chillingworth*, in his Treatise of the *Divine Right of Episcopacy:* And above all, you should have considered, that the Doctor wrote his *Irenicum* in his younger Days, with a pacifick View, to compose and put an End to the great Heats and Animosities, then subsisting in their greatest Height, between those of the episcopal Persuasion and the Presbyterians; and that out of his ardent Zeal for the Peace of the Church, he made some Concessions which he afterwards recanted, [d] and was as heartily ashamed of, as you now seem to be of that Opinion which, you say, you were once a zealous Assertor of.

As for the Plea for the divine Right of Episcopacy, if it was not *ex professo* pleaded in the primitive Times, there is a very good Reason to be assigned for it; because no Man in those Days disputed or called it in Question; *Arrius* who was the first that did, is reckoned by *Epiphanius*, to be no less than a Monster, and he was unanimously condemned by the whole Church universal.

In the late Revolution, when Episcopacy was abolished by Act of Parliament in *Scotland*, there was a very learned Divine of the Church of *Scotland*, who published a Book in *London*, intitled, *The principles of the Cyprianick Age, with regard to episcopal Power and Jurisdiction*; and soon after he published a Vindication of that Discourse, against the Answer of *Gilbert Rule*, principal Regent of the University of *Edinburgh*, and the stated and authorised Champion of the *Scotish* Presbyterian Kirk: In the Vindication there is a whole Chapter upon the divine Right of Episcopacy, in which the

[d] See the Appendix to his *Irenicum*.

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the Author proves, that all the Fathers of that Age, (the third Century) did look upon Epiſcopacy as of divine Right, and reaſoned upon Suppoſition of it; and he proves it by ſuch Arguments and expreſs Teſtimonies, as would, I am perſwaded, puzzle either the Doctor if he were alive, or even you your ſelf to anſwer: I recommend the Book to your peruſal, or of any one who is deſirous of thorough Satisfaction, in the Controverſy between the Church and the Preſbyterians, about Church Government.

As to Hereſy and Schiſm, you cannot, you ſay, find any one Text in the Bible where they are taken in the modern Senſe; or any Scripture wherein Hereſy is taken for an Error in Opinion, whether fundamental or not; or where Schiſm ſignifies Separation from the Church, with Cauſe or without; and you wiſh me to re-conſider the Point, and review the ſeveral Texts where theſe Terms occur.

In Reply to this I can only ſay, that I could wiſh you had informed me in what other poſſible Senſe, than the modern, you yourſelf underſtand theſe Terms; or what Difference you make between the modern and the antient Senſe of them; or, in a Word, whether you believe there is any ſuch thing as a damnable Hereſy or Schiſm; or whether you take them to be mere inſignificant Terms, without any determinate Senſe or Meaning.

I have, at your Requeſt, re-conſidered this Point very ſeriouſly, and have examined the moſt material Texts, wherein the Term, eſpecially that of Hereſy, occurs: And as to the Term Hereſy, I find there is a Difference between the ſtrict Notation of the Word, and the eccleſiaſtical Uſe of it, as a technical Term: In the ſtrict Notation of it, I find it ſignifies merely, and only, Election or Choice, being derived from a Greek Verb [e] which ſignifies to chuſe; hence the Word αἵρεσις, came to ſignify any Opinion, Syſtem,

[e] αἱρέω, *Eligo.*

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or Profeſſion which a Man chuſes to hold, maintain, or profeſs, without any Note or Brand of Malignity neceſſarily annexed to it; and in this Senſe I underſtand the Term as it occurs, *Acts* xxiv. 5. and *Acts* xxvi. 5. But in the eccleſiaſtical Senſe of the Term it ſignifies an Error voluntarily choſen, and obſtinately adhered to, and conſequently has always a Note or Brand of Malignity affixed to it. And in this Senſe I underſtand the Term as it occurs, 1. *Cor.* xi. 18, 19, and 2. *Pet.* ii. 1. According to this eccleſiaſtical uſe of the Word αἵρεσις, or Hereſy, is defined by *Phavorinus* to be ἡ περὶ τινὸς ἐκ ἀληθὴς δόξα, that is, a falſe Opinion conceived or entertained concerning the Faith, or any Part, Branch, or Article of it: for as Apoſtacy is the renouncing or caſting off the whole and intire Faith, ſo Hereſy is the renouncing or caſting off any Part, Branch, or Article of it.

THIS appears plainly from 2. *Pet.* ii. 1. where the Apoſtle, ſpeaking of falſe Prophets, ſays, that they privily brought in damnable Hereſies, even denying the Lord that bought them. The judicious *Grotius*, upon the Text, ſuppoſes that the *Carpocratians* were the falſe Prophets here aimed at by the Apoſtle: Theſe Hereticks affirmed, that Jeſus was only the Son of *Joſeph* and *Mary*, born in the natural way of Generation, denying his Divinity and Eternity, and conſequently denying the Honour that was due to him. Hence, I think, it evidently follows, that Hereſy, according to Scripture, is the Denial of, or a falſe Opinion conceived or entertained, concerning ſome neceſſary Article of Faith, for ſuch, I hope, you allow the believing of Chriſt's Divinity and Eternity to be; the denial of which, St. *Peter* expreſly calls a Damnable Hereſy. Whilſt a Man keeps his falſe Opinion to himſelf, he is but a mere and ſimple Heretick only; but if he propagates his falſe Opinion, either by preaching or writing, and gathers Diſciples after him, in Oppoſition to, or Separation from the Church, he then

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then becomes a Schiſmatick, or Separatiſt from her Communion, as well as a Heretick from her Faith. In a Word, Sir, I never heard or read of any other Senſe or Meaning of the Words Hereſy and Schiſm, (eſpecially as underſtood by all the antient and primitive Saints and Fathers of God's Church) according to the eccleſiaſtical Uſe of theſe Terms, than that one was an obſtinate Denial of ſome neceſſary Article of the Faith, and the other a cauſeleſs Separation from an orthodox and true Church, when no ſinful Term or Condition of Communion is either required or impoſed; and ſhould be extremely obliged to you, if you were pleaſed to inform me, in what other Senſe or Meaning you do, or indeed poſſibly can, underſtand theſe Terms, as they occur in thoſe Places of Scripture, wherein they are moſt evidently branded with Notes and Marks of Malignity.

In your Poſtſcript you tell me, that what you mean by Orthodoxy's being, at the very beſt, but a ſlender Part of Religion, if it may be allowed to be any Part at all of it, (which it ſeems with you is a Queſtion,) is, that in a Child of God, holy in Heart and Life, his right Opinions are but the ſlendereſt Parts of his Religion; but in a Child of the Devil they are no Part at all, nor indeed can be, becauſe a Child of the Devil has no Religion at all.

In order to ſet this Matter in a clear Light, let me obſerve to you, that when we ſpeak of Religion, we are, I humbly preſume, by Religion ſuppoſed to mean, the entertaining and conceiving ſuitable Thoughts and Apprehenſions of the Nature of God, his Attributes, and his Word, in our Minds; and the exemplifying and expreſſing theſe inward Thoughts and Apprehenſions, by ſuch outward Acknowledgments and Actions, as are ſuitable to our natural Notions of the Diety, and to the Revelations and Directions which God has been pleaſed to make and to give, either by the clear Dictates of Reaſon, or of the Holy Scrip-

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tures, concerning these outward Actions and Acknowledgments. Now Orthodoxy is nothing else but the conceiving and entertaining of such Sentiments and Thoughts concerning God, his Nature, Attributes, and Words, as are agreeable to our natural Notions of the Deity, and to the Revelations and Directions which God has been pleased to make, and give us concerning them: And therefore most evidently Orthodoxy is as necessary and essential a Part of Religion, as the outward Acts and Acknowledgments that result from it; nay, in some Sense it is a more necessary and essential Part, because of the great Influence which either Orthodoxy or Heterodoxy has upon Practice, either for the better or the worse: For entertaining wrong Notions or Opinions concerning the Nature, Attributes, or Word of God, does, in many Cases and Instances, produce such outward Acts, as are rather a Dishonour than an Honour to him. Men of unsound and heterodox Opinions, and Principles, are generally (I had almost said necessarily) unsound in their Practice; whereas sound and orthodox Opinions and Principles, do generally and naturally produce sound and holy Actions, as a good Tree naturally produces good Fruit.

But to argue as you do, that because a Child of the Devil has no Religion at all, that therefore Orthodoxy is no Part of Religion, is the strangest Inference I have ever met with. Pray, Sir, is Holiness of Heart and Life no Part of Religion, because a Child of the Devil has no Religion at all? You will not, I am sure, affirm it; and yet you may with as much Reason and Truth affirm it, as you do that Orthodoxy is no Part of Religion, because a Child of the Devil has no Religion at all. It is, Sir, in this Case, as I conceive, as in the Case of Faith and Good Works, both which are equally necessary; and as we cannot say that Faith is not necessary, because St. *James* says, that without good Works it is dead, and has no Life or Energy in it, so neither can we say, that Orthodoxy is no Part of Religion,

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Religion, becauſe to a Child of the Devil, who has not a ſuitable Practice, it is uſeleſs and of no Effect.

I ACKNOWLEDGE that tho' we cannot unite in all Opinions, yet we may unite in Love; tho' at the ſame Time you muſt allow, that the greater our Union in Opinion is, the greater and cloſer our Union in Love will conſequently be; and that therefore the greater ſhould be our Endeavours to attain the former, in order to obtain the latter. I alſo acknowledge, that the beſt of our Endeavours ſhould be applied towards beating down all manner of Sin, both in ourſelves and others; but then, I humbly preſume, that it is, on the other Hand, incumbent on us to uſe proportionable Endeavours, towards baniſhing all ſtrange and erroneous Doctrines and Opinions, as an excellent Means to beat down many Sins, and eſpecially becauſe in many Caſes, we cannot do the one without the other. As for Inſtance, how can you convince a Papiſt of the crying Sin of Idolatry in worſhiping the Hoſt, unleſs you firſt convince him of the Falſhood of the Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation. For ſo long as he believes that Doctrine, he can never be perſuaded that it is any Sin, but rather an indiſpenſible Duty to worſhip the Hoſt.

To conclude, Sir, you muſt give me Leave to be ſo free to declare, that I think it too plainly appears from your Diſcourſe upon Catholick Spirit, from the Rule and Maxim, which you and your Brother laid down to yourſelves, when ye undertook the Propagation of Methodiſm in *London*, and from the weak, (and you muſt excuſe me if I call it) evaſive Anſwer and Defence you make in your Letter, that you are either indifferent as to any Man's Principles in Religion, and conſequently guilty of that Latitudinarianiſm in Speculation which you yourſelf very juſtly and truly call the Curſe of Heaven and Spawn of Hell; or elſe, that you conceal your Sentiments, in order to ingratiate yourſelf with the Diſſenters from

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that Church, whereof you do as yet profeſs yourſelf a Member, thereby to facilitate (for the farther ſtrengthening and enlarging your Party and Society) your gaining the more Proſelytes from among them.

BUT I rather, in Charity, believe the former than the latter; becauſe, in Reality, the former may be an Error of your Judgment only, but the latter is ſuch a groſs Piece of Hypocriſy and Prevarication, as I would not readily ſuſpect any one, much leſs a Reverend Brother, could be guilty of. I am,

Reverend Sir,

Hollymount,
July 9th,
1756.

Your, &c.

J. C.

LETTER IV.

Mr. WESLY's Anſwer to the foregoing Letter.

Rev. Sir, *London, Sept.* 18, 1756.

YESTERDAY I received your Favour of *July* 9th; as you therein ſpeak freely and openly, I will endeavour to do the ſame, at which I am perſuaded you will not be diſpleaſed.

1. OF the Words imputed to Mr. *Langſton* I ſaid nothing, becauſe he denied the Charge, and I had not an Opportunity of having the Accuſer and the Accuſed Face to Face.

2. THAT there are Enthuſiaſts among the Methodiſts I doubt not, and among moſt other People under Heaven; but that they are made ſuch by our Doctrine and Diſcipline ſtill remains to be proved: If they

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they are such in spite of our Doctrine and Discipline, their Madness will not be laid to our Charge.

I KNOW nothing about the anonymous Pamphlet on Inspiration. How does it appear to be wrote by one of my Disciples? Be it good, bad, or indifferent I am not concerned, or any way accountable for it.

3. I BELIEVE several who are not episcopally ordained, are nevertheless called of God to preach the Gospel; yet I have no Exception to the twenty-third Article, tho' I judge there are exempt Cases. That the seven Deacons were outwardly ordained, even to that low Office, cannot be denied; but when *Paul* and *Barnabas* were separated for the Work to which they were called, this was not ordaining them; St. *Paul* was ordained long before, and that not of Man nor by Men; it was inducting him into the Province for which our Lord had appointed him from the Beginning. For this End the Prophets and Teachers fasted and prayed, and laid their Hands upon them, a Rite which was used, not in Ordination only but in Blessing, and many other Occasions.

4. CONCERNING Diocesan Episcopacy, there are several Questions which I should be glad to have answered, as, 1. Where is it prescribed in Scripture? 2. How does it appear that the Apostles settled it in all the Churches which they planted? 3. How does it appear they settled it in any, so as to make it of perpetual Obligation? It is allowed that Christ and his Apostles settled the Church under some Form of Government; but, 1. Did they put all Churches under the same precise Form? If they did, 2. Can we prove this to be the precise Form, and the very same which now obtains in *England*?

5. How *Phavorinus* or many more may define Heresy or Schism, I am not concerned to know: I well know Heresy is vulgarly defined, "a false Opinion "touching some necessary Article of Faith; and "Schism a causeless Separation from a true Church:"

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But I keep to my Bible, as our Church in her ſixth Article teaches me; therefore I cannot take Schiſm for a Separation from a Church, becauſe I cannot find it ſo taken in Scripture; the firſt time I meet the Term there is 1 *Cor.* i. 10. I meet with it again ch. xi. 18. But it is plain in both Places, by Schiſm is meant, not any Separation from the Church, but uncharitable Diviſions in it; for the *Corinthians* continued to be one Church, notwithſtanding their Striſe and Contention; there was no Separation of one Part from the other, with regard to external Communion; it is in the ſame Senſe the Word is uſed ch. xii. 25; and theſe are the only Places in the New Teſtament where the Term occurs: Therefore the indulging any unkind Temper towards our fellow Chriſtians is the true ſcriptural Schiſm.

INDEED both Hereſy and Schiſm (which are Works of the Fleſh, and conſequently damnable if not repented) are here mentioned by the Apoſtle in very near the ſame Senſe, unleſs by Schiſms be meant rather thoſe inward Animoſities which occaſioned Hereſies, that is outward Diviſions and Parties; ſo that while one ſaid I am of *Paul*, another I am of *Apollos*, this implied both Hereſy and Schiſm; ſo wonderfully have latter Ages diſtorted the Words Hereſies and Schiſms from their ſcriptural Meaning: Hereſy is not in all the Bible taken for an Error in Fundamentals, nor in any thing elſe; nor Schiſm for any Separation from the Communion of others; therefore Hereſy and Schiſm, in the modern Senſe of the Words, are Sins that the Scriptures know nothing of.

6. BUT tho' I aver this, am I quite indifferent as to any Man's Principles in Religion? Far, very far from it, as I have declared again and again, in the very Sermon under preſent Conſideration, in the *Character of a Methodiſt*, in the *Plain Account*, and twenty Tracts beſides, I have written ſeverally againſt Deiſts, Papiſts, Myſticks, *&c.* an odd way to ingratiate

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gratiate myſelf with them, to ſtrike at the Apple of their Eye. Nevertheleſs in all Things indifferent (but not at the Expence of Truth) I rejoice to pleaſe all Men for their Good to Edification, if happily I may gain the more Proſelytes to genuine ſcriptural Chriſtianity; if I may prevail on the more to love God and their Neighbour, and to walk as Chriſt walked. So far as I find them obſtructive of theſe, I oppoſe Opinions with my Might; though even then, rather by guarding thoſe that are free, than by diſputing with thoſe that are deeply infected: I need not diſpute with many of them to know there is no Probability of Succeſs, or of convincing them. A thouſand times I have found my Father's Words true, "You may have "Peace with the Diſſenters, if you do not ſo humour "them as to diſpute with them; if you do, they will "out-face and out-lung you, and at the End you will "be juſt where you were in the Beginning."

I HAVE now, Sir, humoured you ſo as to diſpute a little with you; but with what Probability of Succeſs? Suppoſe you have a ſingle Eye in this Debate? Suppoſe you aim not at Victory, but at the Truth? Yet what Man of threeſcore (unleſs perchance one in an Age) was ever convinced? Is not an old Man's Motto *Non perſuadebis etiamſi perſuaſeris?* When we are paſt middle Age, do we not find a kind of Stiffneſs and Inflexibility ſtealing upon the Mind as well as on the Body? And does not this bar the Gate againſt all Conviction? Even before the Eye of the Soul grows dim, and ſo leſs and leſs capable of diſcerning Things which we are not already well acquainted with.

7. YET on one Point I muſt add a few Words, becauſe it is of the laſt Importance. I ſaid Orthodoxy, or right Opinion, was never more than a ſlender Part of Religion, and ſometimes no Part at all, and this I explained thus; "in a Child of God it is but a ſlen-"der Part, in a Child of the Devil it is no Part at all "of Religion." The Religion of a Child of God is Righ-

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Righteouſneſs, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt; Now if Orthodoxy be any Part of this, (which in itſelf might admit of a Queſtion) it is certainly a very ſlender Part; tho' it is a conſiderable Help of Love, Peace, and Joy. Religion, in other Words, is the Love of God and Man, producing all Holineſs of Converſation; now are right Opinions any more than a ſlender Part (if they be ſo much) of this? Once more, Religion is the Mind that was in Chriſt, and walking as Chriſt walked; now how ſlender a Part of this are Opinions, how right ſoever?

By a Child of the Devil, I mean one that neither loves, fears, or ſerves God, and has no true Religion at all; but it is certain ſuch a Man may be ſtill orthodox, may entertain right Opinions; and yet it is equally certain, theſe are no Parts of Religion in him that has no Religion at all.

Permit me, Sir, to ſpeak exceeding plainly: Are you not an orthodox Man? Perhaps there is none more ſo in the Dioceſe; yet poſſibly you may have no Religion at all; if it be true that you frequently drink to Exceſs, you may have Orthodoxy, but you can have no Religion; if when you are in a Paſſion you call your Brother, thou Fool, you have no Religion at all; if you then even curſe and ſwear, by taking God's Name in vain, you can have no other Religion but Orthodoxy; a Religion of which the Devil and his Angels have as much as you.

O! Sir, what an idle Thing it is for you to diſpute about Lay-preachers! Is not a Lay-preacher preferable to a drunken Preacher, to a curſing, ſwearing Preacher? *To the Ungodly, ſaith God, why takeſt thou my Covenant in thy Mouth*, whereas thou hateſt to be reformed, *and caſt my Words behind thee?* In tender Compaſſion I ſpeak this, may God apply it to your Heart, and then you will not receive this as an Affront, but as the trueſt Inſtance of Brotherly Love, from, Reverend Sir,

Yours, &c. J. W.

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LETTER V.

A third Letter to Mr. WESLY.

Rev. Sir,

I RECEIVED your Favour, dated from *London* the 18th inſtant, and that very unexpectedly; becauſe, though I did at firſt deſign to have ſent the Letter to you, to which this comes as an Anſwer, yet finding you had left this Part of the Country, before I had an Opportunity of ſending it to you, and (on account of the quickneſs of your Motions from one Place to another) not knowing whither to direct it for you, I took a Reſolution of dropping all further epiſtolary Correſpondence with you, foreſeeing that the Diſpute between us would, in the End, come to what I find, by this your laſt Favour, it has actually done; namely, that you would put me off with ſome inconſiſtent ſophiſtical Anſwers and ſhuffling Evaſions, or elſe, that when you had nothing elſe to ſay for yourſelf, you would (like moſt Diſputants in the like Circumſtances, have Recourſe to bare-faced Scandal and perſonal Reflection; both which, but eſpecially of the laſt, you have in a Manner very unbecoming a Gentleman or a Scholar, not to talk of the Chriſtian or the Clergyman, given me ſufficient Proof in this your laſt Letter.

BUT becauſe ſome of your Diſciples have, by ſome clandeſtine Means, procured a Copy of the Letter which I had deſigned to have ſent you, and tranſmited it to you to *London*, I will for this Time break thro' the Reſolution I had taken, and will continue the Correſpondence; and ſhall, becauſe I deſign it for the laſt Eſſay, give you ſo full and particular an Anſwer, Paragraph by Paragragh, as I hope may, if you are capable of it, convince you of your Errors, and make you aſhamed of the ungentleman-like Treatment which,

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out of your great and tender Compaſſion, you have been pleaſed to afford me.

In your firſt Paragraph you excuſe your not mentioning the Charge of Blaſphemy exhibited againſt *Langſton*, becauſe, as you ſay, he denied the Charge, and that you had not the Accuſer and the Accuſed Face to Face.

Whether Mr. *Langſton* denied the Charge, or not, is beſt known to yourſelves both; but then I think his denying it, inſtead of being a Reaſon for your Silence about it, ought to be the only Motive to induce you to ſay ſomething of or concerning it, both in Juſtice to him and Charity to me, as you could not but know, it was natural for me to take your Silence for Conſent, and Acknowledgment of the Charge, and thereupon conclude him guilty. But, Sir, pleaſe to inform me, how came you, when Mr. *Bermingham*, in one of your Meetings at *Caſtlebar*, accuſed the ſame Mr. *Langſton* of ſeveral heinous Crimes and Enormities, and offered to produce undeniable Evidences to ſupport and prove the Accuſation; how came you, I ſay, to quaſh and ſmother the Indictment, and not ſuffer it to be brought to the Teſt? I ſuppoſe, if an Accuſer had appeared to prove the Charge of Blaſphemy againſt him, he would meet with no better Encouragement or Reception than Mr. *Bermingham* did; ſo tender were you of the Reputation of a blaſphemous Lay-preacher of your own Society, and ſo very ready to entertain a falſe and groundleſs Calumny againſt the Reputation of a Brother Clergyman.

And here, Sir, you muſt give me Leave to put you in mind, that having told me in your firſt Letter that Mr. *Langſton* was no Preacher approved by you, I did, as I thought, very civilly intreat the Favour of you to let me know by what Authority you took upon you to approve or diſapprove of Preachers, or who gave you that Authority? Or by what (more than pontifical) Authority you preſumed to fix Lay-preachers or Leaders

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ers as you call them, in ſeveral Diſtricts of the Country, in open Defiance to the chief Governors of the Church, to whom at your Ordination you vowed all due Submiſſion and Obedience: But to this very civil Requeſt you have given a deaf Ear, and not vouchſafed to return the leaſt Word of Anſwer; either becauſe you thought it beneath you to give me the Satisfaction I requeſted, or rather, more probably, becauſe you were conſcious to yourſelf, that you could not aſſign any Authority ſufficient to juſtify your Preſumption in ſo irregular and altogether illegal a Conduct. I am afraid, Sir, I ſhall have more Occaſion to put you in mind of ſome other more material Omiſſions before I have done with you. But to return to Mr. *Langſton.*

If the unhappy Man was guilty of the Blaſphemy (I fear too truly) laid to his Charge, he may thank you, and no other, for it; for if ever he read your *Serious Anſwer to Dr.* Trap, and underſtood the Conſequence of what he read, it was almoſt impoſſible for him, if he believed what he read to be true, not to fall into that, or ſome other equivalent Blaſphemy. For in that Anſwer, beſides many bold, unwarrantable Propoſitions, advanced by you concerning the Fall of Men and Angels, and which you yourſelf, or ſomebody for you, acknowledge, with a *Nota bene* at the Bottom of the Page, to be deſtitute of all Scripture Proof or Authority, I find the following Words[f]: "As we are, ſay you, earthly, corrupt, worldly "Men, by having the Life and Nature of the firſt "*Adam* propagated in us; ſo muſt we become holy, "paradiſaical, and heavenly Men, by having the "Nature and Life of the ſecond *Adam* propagated "in us, or, as the Scripture ſpeaks, by being born "again: Jeſus Chriſt therefore ſtands as our Rege"neration to help us, by a ſecond Birth from him, "to the ſame holy, undefiled Nature, which he him-

"ſelf

[f] Page 29, 30.

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" ſelf aſſumed in the Womb of the bleſſed Virgin " *Mary*, and which we ſhould have received in Pa- " radiſe from our firſt Father before his Fall;" and you poſitively affirm, " that if the very Life and iden- " tical Nature of Chriſt be not propagated and deri- " ved in us, he is not our Saviour."

Now who can admire that *Langſton* reading this Paſſage, and taking all your Doctrines for Oracles, and in one of the Paroxyſms of his Enthuſiaſm fancying himſelf thus regenerated, who can admire, I ſay, that he ſhould thereupon believe that he had, by being ſo regenerated, the very Nature, Life, and Spirit of Chriſt derived and propagated in him; nay, that holy, undefiled, and paradiſaical Nature which he aſſumed in the Womb of the holy Virgin; from which nothing could be more natural for him than to conclude, that he was thereupon become as righteous and free from Sin as ever Jeſus Chriſt was.

For if it be really true that by Regeneration, or the ſecond Birth, we have the holy, ſpotleſs, and paradiſaical Nature of Chriſt, even that undefiled Nature which he aſſumed in the Womb of the holy Virgin; if, I ſay, we have this very Nature as truly and really derived and propagated in us by a ſecond Birth, as we have the corrupted Nature of the firſt *Adam* propagated and derived in us by our firſt Birth, it ſeems evidently to follow, that upon this ſecond Birth we become as righteous and free from Sin as ever Jeſus Chriſt was: For if we have his very identical Nature, Life, and Spirit propagated in us, we muſt of Neceſſity have his Righteouſneſs and Freedom from Sin, which are the neceſſary Conſequences of his holy, undefiled, and paradiſaical Nature, propagated in us alſo. And thus, Sir, by a plain and neceſſary Conſequence from this Doctrine [g] of yours, you were the (almoſt)

[g] This Doctrine, beſides its being directly contrary to the ninth Article of our Church, which affirms the Corruption of Nature to remain

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(almoſt) unavoidable Occaſion of that poor Soul's Blaſphemy; for which, unleſs you endeavour to diſabuſe him, you will moſt certainly be accountable as an Acceſſory at the laſt Day.

To your ſecond Paragraph I anſwer, that it is not only paſt Doubt that there are ſome Enthuſiaſts among the Methodiſts, but it is certain and evident to all the World that moſt, if not all, of them are ſo: This at leaſt is moſt manifeſt, that there are more Enthuſiaſts among them than among any other Denomination of Chriſtians in the three Nations; and I am very apt to think that you yourſelf are as great an Enthuſiaſt (though you may not be ſenſible of it) as any among them; and that all this muſt be owing to your Doctrine and Diſcipline, no better Proof can be deſired, or indeed rationally expected, than that however ſober or rational Men may be before, yet they no ſooner become your Diſciples than they do then, or ſoon after, become manifeſt Enthuſiaſts.

As to the anonymous Pamphlet upon Inſpiration, I can no otherwiſe prove the Author to be a Diſciple of yours than by affirming, as I can with Truth do, that it was recommended and put into my Hands for a Methodiſt Book; and I am very much inclined to believe that it was really ſo, for this very good Reaſon, becauſe the Author, whoever he was, copies exactly after yourſelf; for you (as well as all other Methodiſts, with whom or their Writings I have had any Converſation or Acquaintance) ſtrenuouſly plead for the extraordinary and immediate Inſpirations and Influences of the Holy Ghoſt, as abſolutely neceſſary to every Chriſtian; and you, in particular, in your Anſwer to Dr. *Trap*, p. 49. ridicule the Diſtinction and Difference between the extraordinary and immediate, and the ordinary and mediate Influences and Inſpirations of the Holy Ghoſt, calling it a mere Dream; and

remain in the Regenerate, is over and above bordering upon Blaſphemy.

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and how naturally ſuch Doctrine as this leads to Enthuſiaſm, the evident Effects of it upon the Generality of your Diſciples, who take all your Doctrines for Oracles, plainly demonſtrate.

In your third Paragraph you tell me, that you believe ſeveral are called of God to preach the Goſpel, though not epiſcopally ordained; and yet you ſay, you have no Exception to the twenty-third Article of our Church, though you judge there are ſome Caſes exempt.

Never, I believe, was ſo much Sophiſtry and Inconſiſtency couched together in ſo few Lines; for by your mentioning epiſcopal Ordination, one would be apt to imagine you had ſome other Kind or Species of Ordination in view; and who knows but you mean ſome Ordination of your own, by virtue of which you think your Preachers may lawfully preach, though not epiſcopally ordained; and that therefore you may ſay you have no Objection to the Article; for though the Article ſays, that no Man may take upon him the Office of publick preaching, before he be lawfully called and ſent to execute the ſame, yet as it does not mention an epiſcopal Miſſion in Terms, poſſibly you may imagine that your own Call and Miſſion may be equivalent to any epiſcopal Call or Miſſion whatſoever; for I know no other poſſible Means of clearing you from a moſt evident and glaring Inconſiſtency, in allowing Men to exerciſe the Office of publick preaching, without any viſible Call or Miſſion but what they receive from yourſelf; and at the ſame Time declaring, that you have no Objection to the Article, which flatly condemns all who take upon them that Office, without a regular Call from thoſe who have publick Authority given them in the Church or Congregation, to call and ſend Miniſters into the Lord's Vineyard; and in the Church of *England* none have this Authority but the Biſhops. In a Word, either the Article is falſe, or, if true, there is no other way of clearing you

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you of acting in Oppoſition to it, but by ſuppoſing that you look upon your Society as a diſtinct Church, and that your Call or Miſſion in your own Church, is equivalent to an epiſcopal Call or Miſſion in the eſtabliſhed Church. But,

2. By being called of God to preach the Goſpel, you muſt either mean that they have a direct and immediate Call, ſuch as the Prophets and Apoſtles had; or elſe, that though they have not ſuch an immediate and direct Call, yet they have by their own Study, and the ordinary Bleſſing of God upon their Endeavours, acquired ſuch Gifts and Talents as qualify and enable them to preach, though they are neither epiſcopally or otherwiſe ordained. If you mean it in the firſt Senſe, I readily grant that ſuch as are ſo called may lawfully preach, without any other Ordination, provided they can prove their Call after the ſame Manner that the Prophets, Apoſtles, and other inſpired Perſons proved theirs, that is, by plain and inconteſtable Miracles; otherwiſe no Man can, in Reaſon or Prudence, believe that they are ſo called, or conſequently that they can preach by Virtue of ſuch a pretended Call, (for it can be no more than pretended till ſufficiently proved, nor can it be ſo proved otherwiſe than by Miracles) lawfully preach, that is, become publick Preachers of the Goſpel in the Church or Congregation.

If you mean it in the ſecond Senſe, then you muſt either allow that they have no Right to become publick Preachers of the Goſpel, until their Gifts and Talents are examined and approved by the Governors of the Church, and are thereupon regularly admitted to execute that Office, according to the Rules of the Goſpel and the Laws and Canons of the Church; or you muſt intirely give up the twenty-third Article, which enacts and provides, that no Perſon whatſoever, be his Gifts, Talents, or Endowments ever ſo great or eminent, ſhall preſume to take upon himſelf the Of-

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fice of a publick Preacher or Teacher in the Church, until he is ſo examined and called. So that, in ſhort, your aſſenting to the Truth of the Article, and declaring that you have no Exception to it, and your allowing mere Laymen, without any publick Call, or Ordination from the Governors of the Church, to take and aſſume to themſelves the Office of publick Preachers of God's Word, are altogether inconſiſtent, and mutually deſtroy each other.

As to your exempt Caſes, I am ſure the Article exempts none; and I could wiſh you had mentioned ſome Caſe, which you believed to be exempted. I know but of one (except the Caſe of an immediate and direct Call or Miſſion from God, which I preſume your Lay-preachers have the Modeſty not to pretend to) which has any Reſemblance of an exempt one, and that is, the Caſe of a Layman's happening into a Country where the Name of Chriſt is neither known nor acknowledged; and when this ſhall happen to be the Caſe with any of them, we ſhall find no Fault with them to become publick Preachers of the Goſpel; but, till then, we muſt look upon them to be ſchiſmatical and ſacrilegious Intruders into an Office, to which they have no Manner of Right by any Law of God or Man.

That *Paul* and *Barnabas* were deſigned and ſet apart for the apoſtolick Office at large, ſome time before, I readily grant; but that they were ordained for the Execution of any peculiar or particular Miniſtry, till Hands were laid upon them by the Prophets, or chief Governors of the Church at *Antioch*, that I deny; for to deſign and ſet apart for the Execution of an Office is one Thing, and to be actually ordained and deputed to execute it, is another.

I do ſuppoſe, Sir, that your Father deſigned and ſet you apart for the Miniſtry, ſome time before you were actually ordained a Miniſter; and it was the very ſame Caſe with the twelve original Apoſtles; they were

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were designed and set apart from the rest of his Disciples by our blessed Saviour, and trained up by him for the apostolick Office long before they were actually ordained; for they were not ordained till after our Saviour's Resurrection, when he breathed on them, and said, *Receive the Holy Ghost,* [h] *whose Sins ye remit, they are remitted*; and again, *as the Father sent me, so I send you*; after which he desired them to stay at *Jerusalem* until this their private (as it were) Ordination was made more publickly authentick, by the visible and miraculous Descent of the Holy Ghost upon them. And although I grant that the Rite of imposing Hands was used on other Occasions, as well as Ordination, yet every Circumstance of the Passage under present Consideration, plainly shows, that the Imposition of Hands here mentioned was applied to *Paul* and *Barnabas*, for no other Purpose (the Ceremony of Induction being, I suppose, not quite so antient as the Days of the Apostles) than for ordaining them, for the Discharge of a peculiar Office, for which they had been before designed, and set apart by the Holy Ghost.

In one Word, tho' *Paul* and *Barnabas* were called and ordained of God, and not of Man or by Men, to be Apostles at large, yet they were ordained, and deputed to the particular Ministry of preaching the Gospel to the *Gentiles* by the Church at *Antioch*.

4. In your fourth Paragraph you tell me, there are several Questions concerning Diocesan Episcopacy, which, you say, you would be glad to have answered; the first of which is, Where is it prescribed in Scripture? Before I can answer your Set of Questions, I must here again put you in mind of another Omission of yours: In my former Letter to you, I told you, that you yourself having, in your Discourse upon Catholick Spirit, acknowledged that you believed Episcopacy to be both scriptural and apostolical, by which you meant (as you explain yourself in your first Let-

[h] John xx.

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ter) that it was very well agreeing with the Practice and Writings of the Apoſtles; I told you, I ſay, that this was equivalent to, and the ſame Thing with, being preſcribed in Scripture; for if it was the Form of Government which the Apoſtles ſettled, in all the Churches which they founded, and which they recommended in their Writings, (and if it was not ſo, pray tell me how could it be, as you confeſs, agreeable either to their Practice or their Writings) every Man of common Senſe and Reaſon muſt allow, that this was, in other Words, the ſame Thing as a ſcriptural Preſcription.

But of all this you take no manner of Notice, but, for Reaſons good and weighty, you paſs it by in profound Silence, and inſtead of endeavouring to take off the manifeſt and apparent Inconſiſtency, between your acknowledging Epiſcopacy to be very well agreeing with the Practice and Writings of the Apoſtles, and denying it a ſcriptural Preſcription, or acknowledging your Error and Miſtake, you only endeavour to embarraſs me with a Set of ſophiſtical Queſtions, altogether inconſiſtent with your own expreſs Acknowledgments.

To your firſt Queſtion therefore, "Where is Epiſ-"copacy preſcribed in Scripture?" I anſwer, 1. *Ad hominem*, that if you will tell me where the Change of the *Sabbath* from the laſt to the firſt Day of the Week, is preſcribed in Scripture, then I will tell you where Epiſcopacy is preſcribed in Scripture alſo; for either you believe the Change of the *Sabbath* to be preſcribed in Scripture, or you do not; if you believe it to be ſo preſcribed, then I defy you to prove it any other way than by its being (as it certainly is) agreeable to the Practice and Writings of the Apoſtles; if then, according to the Suppoſition, you believe the Change of the *Sabbath*, at firſt inſtituted expreſsly by God himſelf to be held on the ſeventh Day, in Memory of his reſting from the Works of Creation on that

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that Day, to the first Day of the Week, in Memory of our Lord's rising from the Dead on that Day, to be a scriptural Prescription, and that you neither have, nor indeed can have, any other Authority for so believing, but that Changes being agreeable both to the Practice and Writings of the Apostles, why do you not believe the scriptural Prescription of Episcopacy, for which, according to your own express Acknowledgment, you have the very same Authority? Lest the World, as it well may, should conclude that you have some particular Pique to Episcopacy, in denying it a scriptural Prescription, when you allow that Prescription to the Change of the *Sabbath*, upon no other Grounds than (you confess) there is for the scriptural Prescription of Episcopacy.

But if you do not believe the scriptural Prescription of the Change of the *Sabbath*, then this Change can have no other Foundation to stand upon, but the Authority and Tradition of the Church prescribing it; and then it is incumbent upon you to tell us, how the Church came by an Authority to change a positive Institution of God, or why her Authority may not extend to all, or any other positive Institution, as well as the *Sabbath*? For to allow the Church, exclusive of the Apostles, any such Authority, is a manifest and a main Principle of Popery, which all Protestants unanimously deny.

2. I answer *ad rem*, that Episcopacy being only the Government of one ruling in chief, or in Superiority over other inferior Church Officers, or Ministers, it is easy to shew where it is prescribed in Scripture: It is prescribed and set down by St. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* xii. 28. where the Apostle tells us expressly that God has set in his Church, 1. Apostles, 2. Prophets, 3. Teachers, *&c.* the plain Meaning of which can be no other, than that God ordered and appointed his Church to be governed by Officers, or Ministers, acting in Superiority one over another, which is the very same

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Thing, in other Words, with Epiſcopacy; for tho' I ſhould grant that Epiſcopacy or Biſhops were not in theſe expreſs Words or Terms mentioned, or preſcribed in Scripture; yet if the Thing meant by both be preſcribed in it, as I think it plainly is, in the above Text of St. *Paul*, this muſt be allowed by all to be abundantly ſufficient to my Purpoſe; for to diſpute about Words or Names, when we are agreed as to the Thing, is both childiſh and ridiculous. But I am under no Neceſſity to take Advantage of this, becauſe the very Name, Office, and Qualifications of Biſhops, in Contradiſtinction to other inferior Church Officers and Miniſters, are mentioned and preſcribed in Scripture, as particularly 1 *Tim.* iii. 1, 2. where the very Name, Office, and Qualifications of a Biſhop are ſet down and preſcribed at large; and *ver.* 8. the Office and Qualification of a Deacon, Miniſter, or any other inferior Attendant upon, or Aſſiſtant to a Biſhop, are preſcribed and ſet down: In the Epiſtle to *Titus c.* i. *ver.* 5. we are told, that he was left by St. *Paul* in *Crete* to ordain Elders, or Biſhops, in every City. That by Elders are meant Biſhops, is apparent from *ver.* 6, 7. where the Qualifications of a Biſhop (as the Elder which *Titus* was left in *Crete* to ordain) are ſet down and deſcribed. *Timothy* was ordained Biſhop of *Epheſus*, the Metropolis of the proconſular *Aſia*, by St. *Paul*, with archiepiſcopal Inſpection over all the other Biſhops of that Province; and accordingly St. *Paul* in his firſt Epiſtle to him, *c.* v. *v.* 1. directs him how to behave towards the Biſhops and Preſbyters of his Province; *Rebuke not*, ſays the Apoſtle, *an Elder*, or Biſhop, *but intreat him as a Father, and the younger Men*, that is, according to the learned Doctor *Hammond* on the Text, any inferior Church Officer or Miniſter, whether Prieſt or Deacon, *as Brethren.* The ſame St. *Paul* inſcribes his Epiſtle to the *Philippians* to the Biſhops and Deacons, that is, not to the Biſhop of *Philippi* alone, but to all the Biſhops of that μεος, or

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or Province of *Macedonia*, whereof *Philippi* was the chief or metropolitan City.

HENCE it appears, that Epiſcopacy was the Form of Government which St. *Paul* eſtabliſhed in that Province, upon its firſt Converſion to Chriſtianity by his Miniſtry.

AND as the univerſal Practice of the Church is the very beſt Evidence we can poſſibly have, of that Form of Church Government which was preſcribed in Scripture, ſo we find that Epiſcopacy was the Form of Church Government which obtained from the very Beginning, as a divine and conſequently a ſcriptural Inſtitution, in all Churches of the Apoſtles planting; we are as certain as we poſſibly can be of any Matter of Fact, at ſo great a Diſtance of Time, and the moſt univerſally and undoubtedly believed by all Mankind.

THAT St. *James* the Brother of our Lord, ſurnamed *the Juſt*, was ordained by the Apoſtles the firſt Biſhop of *Jeruſalem*; that St. *Peter* was the firſt Biſhop of *Antioch*; that St. *Mark* was the firſt Biſhop of *Alexandria*; and laſtly, that St. *Peter* and St. *Paul* were jointly the firſt Biſhops of *Rome*, the one preſiding over the *Jewiſh*, and the other over the *Gentile* Converts of that City. *Euſebius*, and other Church Hiſtorians, has left us a Catalogue of all the Biſhops that ſucceeded theſe original Biſhops, in theſe four great Cities, in a direct Line, all the way down to the firſt Council of *Nice*; and the Evidence for epiſcopal Government in all other Churches, as well as theſe four patriarchal and Mother Churches, both before and ſince the Council of *Nice*, is unqueſtionable. *England*, as well as all other Nations, received Epiſcopacy together with its Chriſtianity, the one was coeval with the other.

LUCIUS the *Britiſh*, and probably the firſt Chriſtian Monarch upon Earth, ſent two Biſhops on an Embaſſy to *Rome*, to which *Britain* was then tributary,

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tary, and a Province of the *Roman* Empire, above two hundred Years before *Auſtin* the Monk came to convert the *Saxons*; and the ſame *Auſtin*, upon his Arrival in *Britain*, found a regular Church in *England*, under an Arch and other Suffragan Biſhops.

LASTLY, I anſwer, that Epiſcopacy is founded upon and preſcribed by the very Words of our Lord to St. *Peter*, *Matth.* xvi. 18. *I ſay unto thee that thou art* Peter, *and upon this Rock I will build my Church, and the Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it; and whatſoever thou ſhalt looſe on Earth ſhall be looſed in Heaven, and whatſoever thou ſhalt bind on Earth ſhall be bound in Heaven*; upon which Words of our Lord the great and glorious Martyr and Archbiſhop of *Carthage*, St. *Cyprian*, diſcourſes thus, in his 33d Ep. p. 66. of the *Oxford* Edition: "Our Lord, ſays he, whoſe Precepts "and Injunctions we ought to dread and obey, pro- "viding for the Honour (or Power) of a Biſhop, and "the Order (or the Frame, Contexture, and Govern- "ment) of a Church, ſpeaks thus to St. *Peter* in his "Goſpel, *I ſay unto thee*, &c. From hence, through "all the Viciſſitudes, and Turns of Times and Suc- "ceſſions, the Ordination (not of any one Biſhop, as "ſovereign Monarch over all others, as the Church "of *Rome* contends, but) of Biſhops in general, and "the Order or Frame and Government of a Church "is handed down to us; ſo that the Church is built, "not upon any one, but upon the College of Biſhops; "and all the Adminiſtration of the Government of "the Church is managed by the ſame Governors, the "Biſhops. Seeing therefore that this (that is moſt "plainly the Government of the Church by Biſhops) "is founded on the DIVINE LAW, it is wonderful "to me that ſome Lapſers ſhould take upon them- "ſelves, with ſo much Boldneſs and Raſhneſs, to write "to me in the Name of a Church, whereas a Church "conſiſts of a BISHOP, his CLERGY, and a faithful "or unlapſing Laity."

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THIS is the full Import and Meaning of the Martyr's own Words, (as near as I could render them) which, to prevent cavilling about their Senſe and Meaning, I have tranſcribed at the Bottom [h] of the Page.

GIVE me Leave now, Sir, to point out to you the Principles upon which this great and learned Martyr founded the aforeſaid Concluſion, which I ſhall do in the Words of a very learned Advocate [i] and Confeſſor for Epiſcopacy in *Scotland:* 1. That our Lord when he ſaid to *Peter*, *I will give thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven*, &c. did thereby inſtitute (not the Supremacy of any one over all others, but) the Honour and Power of every Biſhop, together with the *Ratio* that is, the Frame, the Contexture, and Government of every Church.

2. That in Virtue of that divine Inſtitution, Diſpoſition, Settlement, or Ordinance of our Lord, there had always been, to that very Day, a Succeſſion of ſuch Biſhops.

3. THAT, according to our Lord's Promiſe to St. *Peter*, all particular Churches had been always built upon their particular Biſhops.

4. THAT all thoſe Biſhops had always ordered the Diſcipline, managed the Government, and tempered the Adminiſtration of thoſe particular Churches; and that therefore,

5. BY divine Precept, which all Men ought to ſtand in Awe of and to obſerve, every one ought to obey the

[h] Dominus noſter cujus Præcepta metuere et obſervare debemus, Epiſcopi honorem et Eccleſiæ Rationem diſponens in Evangelio loquitur, et dicit Petro; ego tibi dico quia tu es Petrus et ſuper hanc Petram, &c. inde per Temporum et Succeſſionum Vices, Epiſcoporum Ordinatio et Eccleſiæ Ratio decurrit, ut Eccleſia ſuper Epiſcopos conſtituatur et omnis actus Eccleſiæ, per eoſdem Gubernatores Gubernetur. Cum hoc itaque DIVINA LEGE fundatum ſit miror quoſdam audaci Temeritate, ſic mihi ſcribere voluiſſe, ut Eccleſiæ Nomine Litteras facerent, quando Eccleſia in Epiſcopo et Clero et ſtantibus Laicis ſit conſtituta.

[i] Vide the Vindication of the Principles of the *Cyprian* Age. London printed 1701, ch. x. p. 504.

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the Power of thoſe particular Biſhops, which Power ought to be acknowledged and regarded, by every Member of thoſe particular Churches whereof they are Biſhops: And let me add to theſe Principles, taken from the aforeſaid learned Author,

6. THAT by the divine Law, in the Words of our Saviour to St. *Peter*, every Church muſt conſiſt of a Biſhop, his Clergy, and a faithful (or according to St. *Cyprian*'s Phraſe) a ſtanding Laity, that is, a Laity that fell not from their Chriſtian Profeſſion in time of Perſecution.

FROM all which it evidently follows, that Epiſcopacy is ſo firmly eſtabliſhed upon and preſcribed by Scripture, that (at leaſt in St. *Cyprian*'s Opinion) No Biſhop no Church, is an inconteſtable Maxim. Hence the ſame great Saint and Martyr defines the Church to be, *Plebs Epiſcopo ſuo adunata*, that is, a Flock cloſely united and adhering to their Biſhop: Hence he every where in his Epiſtles makes every Biſhop the Centre and Principle of Unity to his own Church, to be the *unus Judex vice Chriſti*, the one Judge inſtead of Chriſt, that is, his Vicar to his own Flock, without any viſible Superior on Earth. All which Principles, beſides their evidently plucking up the Pope's Supremacy from the very Roots, do over and above, neceſſarily and unavoidably, not only ſuppoſe but infer the ſcriptural, and conſequently the divine Right of Epiſcopacy.

I HAVE inſiſted on this Evidence for the ſcriptural Preſcription of the Government of the Church by Biſhops, not only becauſe it is a ſufficient Confutation of what you do in your firſt Letter, upon the Authority of Dr. *Stillingfleet*'s *Irenicum*, aſſert, namely, that the Plea for the divine Right of Epiſcopacy was never heard of in the primitive Church, but alſo becauſe it is the Evidence of a great, a learned, and holy Martyr, who made a glorious Stand for the Liberties of the Church, and the epiſcopal College, againſt the En-

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Encroachments of the Church of *Rome*, even then appearing in the World; who flouriſhed in the third Century, an Age wherein, by the Conſent of all, it is allowed, that the Doctrine, Diſcipline, and Government of the Church as yet remained ſound and uncorrupt, according as they were at firſt preached, ſettled, and modelled by the holy Apoſtles; an Age ſtrictly tenacious of divine and apoſtolical Inſtitutions, and extremely cautious of the leaſt Variation from them; an Age wherein the extraordinary Manifeſtations and Illuminations of the Holy Ghoſt were common and ordinary, many of which were communicated to this holy Martyr upon ſpecial Occaſions; and finally, an Age wherein they might as certainly know, even by oral Tradition (ſuppoſing there were no written Monuments or Records to inform them) what Form of Government the Apoſtles eſtabliſhed in all the Churches which they planted, as we of this Age can know what Form of Government was eſtabliſhed or agreed upon in *England* and *Ireland* at the Reformation, it being much about the ſame Diſtance of Time from the Death of St. *John* to the Death of St. *Cyprian*, as from the Reformation to our Days.

Upon the whole Matter, I muſt be very free and plain with you, and therefore muſt needs ſay, that you are a Man of very extraordinary and out-of-the-way Principles, firſt to acknowledge Epiſcopacy to be ſcriptural and apoſtolical, and then to deny that it is preſcribed in Scripture; which is juſt as if one that could not deny Monarchy to be agreeable to the Practice, the Laws, and Conſtitution of *England*, yet would make it a Matter queſtionable and diſputable, whether it was preſcribed by either.

Having thus, Sir, anſwered your firſt Queſtion largely, and I hope ſatisfactorily, the reſt of your Queſtions will admit of a quicker Diſpatch.

To your ſecond Queſtion, namely, How does it appear that the Apoſtles eſtabliſhed Epiſcopacy in all the

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the Churches which they planted? I anſwer, 1. That you muſt allow that it was Epiſcopacy alone and no other, or Preſbytery or Independency alone and no other, which the Apoſtles eſtabliſhed in all the Churches which they planted; or that they eſtabliſhed Epiſcopacy in ſome and Preſbytery or Independency in other Churches: If it was Epiſcopacy alone, and no other, which they eſtabliſhed in all the Churches of their Plantation, how came you to make a Queſtion of it? If it was Preſbytery alone, and no other, which they eſtabliſhed, then pray, Sir, be pleaſed to inform me, how can Epiſcopacy, as you expreſsly acknowledge, be agreeable either to their Practice or their Writings?

But if you ſay that they eſtabliſhed Epiſcopacy in ſome, and Preſbytery in other Churches, I muſt ſtill be bold to demand of you, to ſpecify and name the particular Churches in which they eſtabliſhed the one, and in which they eſtabliſhed the other? Which is a Taſk that, I preſume, upon Reflection, you will not readily undertake to execute; and I ſhall make a fair Offer, name but any one Church upon the Face of the whole Earth, from the firſt Foundation of Churches to the Days of *John Calvin*, that was governed by mere Preſbyters alone acting in Parity, and I ſhall moſt chearfully recant and give up the Argument.

2. I answer, That we have as clear and undoubted Evidence, that it was the epiſcopal Form of Government alone which the Apoſtles eſtabliſhed in all the Churches which they planted, as we have that the ſeveral Books of the New Teſtament, which go under the Names of their Authors, were really and actually wrote by them; for all the Evidence we have for this laſt, is the conſtant, uninterrupted and invariable Tradition of all Ages, from their Times to our Days; but we have the very ſame conſtant, uniform, and invariable Tradition, that Epiſcopacy alone was the Form of Church Government which the Apoſtles eſtabliſhed in all the Churches which they planted; for all thoſe who have handed

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handed down to us the Books of the New Teſtament, as Books wrote by the Authors whoſe Names they bear, have in like Manner handed down to us Epiſcopacy, as the Form of Government alone which the Apoſtles eſtabliſhed in all the Churches which they planted: And if you admit the Evidence as good and ſufficient in one Caſe, why not in the other? For where the Evidence is one and the ſame, for two different Matters of Fact, to admit it in one, and reject it in the other, is abſurd and ridiculous.

To your third Queſtion, namely, How does it appear that the Apoſtles eſtabliſhed Epiſcopacy in any Church, ſo as to make it of perpetual Obligation? I anſwer, That Government of ſome Kind being eſſentially neceſſary for the Preſervation of the very Being, as well as the Well-being of every Society, and the Church being a Society inſtituted for the nobleſt Ends, namely, the Glory of God, and Salvation of Souls; it would be a great Reflection upon the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God, to ſuppoſe that he would not ſettle it under ſuch a Form of Government as beſt ſuited theſe Ends, and was moſt conducive towards the attaining of them; and as the Apoſtles acted by a divine Commiſſion, and under the immediate Influence and Directions of the Holy Ghoſt, it is not to be queſtioned but that they did eſtabliſh Epiſcopacy as a Form which they knew, and were informed by the Holy Ghoſt, beſt ſuited the Ends of the Inſtitution of the Society, and was moſt conducive towards attaining of them, and conſequently of perpetual Obligation, until ſome other Set of Men, acting by the ſame divine Commiſſion, and under the ſame Influences of the Holy Ghoſt that they did, ſhall cancel the Obligation.

PART of your fourth Queſtion being the ſame in Effect with your ſecond Queſtion needs no other Anſwer than what was given to it. To the other Part, namely, can we prove the Form which now obtains in

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in *England*, to be the ſame which the Apoſtles eſtabliſhed in all Churches? I anſwer, That having proved Epiſcopacy, or the Government of one ruling in chief, or in Superiority over other inferior Church Miniſters, to have been the Form which the Apoſtles eſtabliſhed in all Churches, we can eaſily prove that to be the Form for Subſtance (though there ſhould be ſome little Difference or Variation in the outward Mode or Manner of Adminiſtration) which now does, and ever has obtained in *England*, becauſe that is a Government of one ruling in chief, or in Superiority over other inferior Church Officers or Miniſters.

As to Hereſy and Schiſm, which are the Subjects of your fifth Paragraph, you do not ſay one Word more, or more to the Purpoſe, in this, than you did in your firſt Letter: In Anſwer to which I told you, that there was a Difference to be obſerved between the ſtrict Notation of the Word αἵρεσις or Hereſy, and the eccleſiaſtical Uſe of it as a technical Term; that accordingly it was *Vox media*, as I now remember *Grotius* ſomewhere calls it, that is, a Word which is ſometimes taken in an indifferent Senſe, and ſometimes in a bad Senſe; I quoted ſome Texts of Scripture where it was taken in both theſe Senſes, and particularly one, namely, 2 *Pet.* ii. 1. where it is evidently taken for a Denial of an Article of Faith; for the Apoſtle in that Text ſpeaks of ſome falſe Prophets who brought in damnable Hereſies, even denying the Lord *Jeſus* that bought them.

Now whether thoſe falſe Prophets were the *Gnoſtic* Hereticks, (according to Dr. *Hammond*) who taught, that it was lawful to deny Chriſt in Times of Perſecution with the Mouth, provided they believed on him in their Hearts; or whether, according to the judicious *Grotius*, they were the *Carpocratian* Hereticks, who denied the Divinity and Eternity of Chriſt, is no way material; ſince in either Caſe it evidently appears from the Text, that Hereſy is the Denial of ſome neceſſary Article

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Article of Faith. Now of this Anſwer, in my ſecond Letter, you take no manner of Notice, but paſs it by in profound Silence. Sir, whether you know it or no, you ſeem to be admirably well qualified for a Commentator, for I find you can paſs by a difficult Paſſage, with as much Eaſe and as little Concern as any of the whole Fraternity.

You tell me over again, that in all the Bible Hereſy is no where taken for an Error in Fundamentals, or any thing elſe: To which I anſwer, that if your Meaning be that it is no where in the Bible ſaid, *Totidem Verbis et Syllabis*, that Hereſy is the Denial of an Article of Faith, or an Error in Fundamentals, or any thing elſe, you do but trifle, and play the Sophiſter moſt egregiouſly: For though it be no where in the Bible, in ſo many expreſs Words, ſo ſaid, yet that Hereſy is ſuch an Error is evidently colligible from the foregoing Text, where denying the Lord *Jeſus* is reckoned among the damnable Hereſies, which the falſe Prophets, there ſpoken of, endeavoured to introduce into the Church. Now I hope you will allow, that denying the Lord *Jeſus*, in any Senſe of the Word denying, muſt be (if not a fundamental) at leaſt ſome Kind of Error; and if this does not convince you that Hereſy is the Denial of, or ſome Kind of Error concerning an Article of Faith, you muſt, in my humble Opinion, be plentifully ſtocked with that for which God has provided no ordinary Remedy, and that is, wilful Obſtinacy.

Indeed, the bare and ſimple Denial of an Article of Faith does not denominate a Man an Heretick; no, nor a ſimple Error maintained againſt even a fundamental Point, unleſs it be maintained with wilful Obſtinacy and pertinacious Animoſity. Hence the great St. *Auſtin* uſed to ſay, *Errare poſſum, Hæreticus eſſe nolo*, I may be miſtaken, but will not be an Heretick. The good Man knew he was not infallible, and was therefore ſubject to Miſtakes; but he was reſolved not to be

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be an Heretick, becauſe he was reſolved never to maintain any Opinion with wilful and pertinacious Animoſity, but always with a Mind duly diſpoſed, and prepared to receive the Truth, whenever it was ſufficiently propoſed to him; therefore he lays it down as a Rule, that "whoever maintains and defends his "Opinion tho' never ſo perverſe, without any pertinacious Animoſity, eſpecially if he was not the firſt "Author or Broacher of it, but received it by Tradition from his ſeduced and erroneous Forefathers, "and in the mean time carefully ſeeks the Truth, "with a Mind duly diſpoſed to receive it whenever "he finds it, is by no Means to be reckoned among "Hereticks." His Opinion indeed is ſtill (conſidered in itſelf) an Hereſy, but not ſo in him, becauſe not maintained with wilful and pertinacious Animoſity; juſt as Poiſon is ſtill Poiſon in itſelf, though ſome Conſtitutions may be ſo ſtrong as to get the better of it; the Man (according to the Language of the Schools) is a material but not a formal Heretick; he maintains the Matter of an Hereſy, but he holds not the Formality of it.

You make no more of Schiſm, in the Scripture Senſe, than indulging a little Unkindneſs of Temper towards our Fellow Chriſtians; and if this be all, it is wonderful and ſurpriſing to me, that the primitive Fathers and Chriſtians ſhould all agree ſo unanimouſly in painting it in ſuch black Colours as they do, eſteeming [k] it a Sin of almoſt as black a Character as Murder, Adultery, or even Idolatry, and not to be expiated without Repentance, and an actual forſaking of it, even by Martyrdom; ſurely they muſt have looked upon it as ſomething of a more heinous Nature than a little Unkindneſs of Temper, expreſſed or indulged towards our Fellow Chriſtians: But the very Import of the Term *Schiſm* implies a great deal more; for

[k] See Dr. *Hammond's* Treatiſe of Schiſm, where you will meet with Teſtimonies of the Ancients to this Purpoſe in abundance.

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for it implies a Rending or Sciſſure, a tearing to Pieces; it is, as the great Primate *Bramhal* ſays, like a Mutiny in an Army, or a Sedition or Rebellion in the State; in a Word, it is an eccleſiaſtical Sedition, or Rebellion againſt our ſpiritual Superiors, and therefore our Church in her excellent Litany, becauſe of their Kindred and near Affinity to each other, next, after *all Sedition, privy Conſpiracy, and Rebellion*, directs us to pray for Deliverance *from all falſe Doctrine, Hereſy, and Schiſm.*

You reject and ſlight *Phavorinus*'s Definition of Hereſy, and indeed the Definition of any other, and will, you ſay, ſtick to your Bible, as the ſixth Article of our Church teaches you. Sir, I perceive where it imports and concerns you moſt, that you are very regardleſs of the Articles of the Church, and can eaſily deviate from them, as in the Caſe of Lay-preachers and the Doctrine of Regeneration, before obſerved; but when it avails you nothing, there you would fain be thought very obſervant of them, as in the Caſe in hand: For what manner of Affinity or Relation have Articles of Faith, neceſſary to be believed by all (of which only the ſixth Article ſpeaks) with the Definition of a Term? And might you not, without any Prejudice to the Article, allow the Definition of *Phavorinus*, notwithſtanding the Article ſays, and that truly, that Scripture is the only Rule of Articles of Faith neceſſary to be believed by all. But haſt thou appealed to the Bible? to the Bible then let us go.

You ſay then, that the firſt Place you meet the Term *Schiſm* is 1 *Cor.* xiii. 10. and again you meet it *c.* xi. 18. But it is plain, you ſay, that in both Places is meant, not any Separation from the Church, but uncharitable Diviſions in it; for the *Corinthians* continued ſtill to be one Church, without any Separation of the one from the other, *&c. &c.* So then it ſeems that a little Unkindneſs of Temper towards each

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other, tho' no Violation of external Communion or Solution of Unity ſhould enſue thereupon, is the Scripture Sin of Schiſm; but if this unkind and uncharitable Temper ſhould end in an open Violation of external Communion, and the Solution of Unity (which the holy Scriptures ſo earneſtly and pathetically recommends among all Members of the Church, which would have been the Effect of the mutual Animoſities and Diviſions among the *Corinthians*, had not the Apoſtle ſeaſonably interpoſed) ſo that Altar is ſet up againſt Altar; then, according to your caſuiſtical Divinity, it ceaſes to be a Sin, at leaſt it is no more to be called the Scripture Sin of Schiſm; the plain and evident Conſequence of which is, that the further and higher Chriſtians carry their unkind Temper againſt each other, and the more ſcandalous and uncharitable the Effects of it are, the leſs ſinful it is; which is ſuch comfortable Doctrine to all our Diſſenters, that I dare venture to promiſe you the hearty Thanks of all Sorts and Sizes of them for it. But becauſe I am one of your old-faſhioned Divines, I cannot poſſibly come into your way of thinking, as to this Particular; for it appears to me, that the Effect muſt of Neceſſity partake of the Nature of the Cauſe that produces it, and that the Branches muſt be of the ſame Nature with the Tree from which they grow. Now I am of Opinion, that uncharitable Diviſions, and unkindneſs of Temper in the Church, are the direct and immediate Cauſes of Separation from the Church, of the Violation of external Communion, and the Solution of Unity, and that conſequently theſe latter are of the ſame Nature with the former; and therefore if one be evil, and the Scripture Sin of Schiſm, the other muſt be the ſame, that is, in plain Terms, if the Root be bitter, the Branches that ſprout from it can never be ſweet. Nay, Sir, I am apt to think, that a cauſeleſs Separation from a true Church, which neceſſarily implies the Violation of external Communion, and the Diſſo-

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Diſſolution of Unity, is much more ſchiſmatical, and conſequently more criminal and ſinful, than a little unkindneſs of Temper, and Strife and Contention, which proceeds no farther, and is not attended with the foregoing violent Effects, and in all Reaſon ought to be deemed Scriptural Schiſm, rather than the latter, becauſe it is much more oppoſite to Charity, and more productive and preſervative of uncharitable Cenſures, Rancour and Malice, which are the Things that render all Ruptures, Schiſms, Diviſions, or Separations, either in or from the Church, ſo very heinous and criminal in the Sight of God.

You conclude your Account of the ſcriptural Senſe of Hereſy and Schiſm, by ſaying, they are Sins which, in the modern Senſe, the Scripture knows nothing of. Here, Sir, I am ſomewhat inclined to agree with you, becauſe your Senſe of theſe Sins is the modern Senſe; for I dare venture to affirm, that you will find no other Senſe of theſe Terms than what I have aſſigned, in all the Records or Monuments of antient Times; and, for aught I know to the contrary, never any Divine, before yourſelf and Mr. *Hoſter*, affirmed, that uncharitable Diviſions in the Church, or indulging a little unkindneſs of Temper towards our fellow Chriſtians, was the only Scripture Sin of Schiſm, and denied that Appellation to a cauſeleſs Separation from a true and orthodox Church, when no ſinful Term or Condition of Communion is either impoſed or required, which is the genuine and natural Conſequence and Effect of ſuch Diviſions.

But notwithſtanding this Opinion of yours, you ſay, you are far from being indifferent as to any Man's Principles in Religion, as appears by your ſeveral Writings againſt Deiſts, Papiſts, *&c. &c. &c.* What you have wrote againſt this Bead-roll of Sectaries is nothing to the Purpoſe; though in all the Catalogues of your Writings, which I have ſeen, I could ſee no Treatiſe or Tract of yours on purpoſe wrote againſt

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any of them; indeed, in ſome of your Appeals which I have read, I find you charging the Preſbyterians and Quakers with degenerating from, and acting contrary to their own original Principles, but very little (if any thing) ſaid in Confutation of theſe Principles upon which they break off from the eſtabliſhed Church: But however that be, all I am at preſent concerned in is your *Diſcourſe upon Catholick Spirit*, which you made me a Preſent of, and the Maxim which in your *Plain Account*, &c. you ſay you laid down to yourſelf and your Brother, that Orthodoxy was but a very ſlender, if it may be allowed to be any Part at all of Religion; and whether from both theſe, and your Defence of them in your Letters to me, it doth not manifeſtly appear to any impartial and indifferent Judge, that you diſcourſed and reaſoned like one that was quite indifferent as to any Man's religious Sentiments, I leave to the Judgment of all thoſe that either have or ſhall read that Sermon, or the Letters which paſſed between you and me upon it; and whether your ſtrange Notions of Hereſy and Schiſm do not adminiſter juſt Grounds, without any Breach of Charity, to ſuſpect that you are a perfect Latitudinarian in Principle.

I DID not, as you ſeem to apprehend, charge you with concealing your Sentiments, I only ſaid, that either you were a Latitudinarian, or concealed your Principles to ingratiate yourſelf with the Diſſenters; but then, Sir, you may remember I told you at the ſame time, that I rather ſuſpected the former than the latter, as one might in Reality be an Error of your Judgment, but the latter being a groſs Piece of Hypocriſy, I would not willingly ſuſpect any Man, much leſs a Brother Clergyman, would be guilty of it.

You ſay, you need not diſpute with many of the Diſſenters to know there is no Probability of Succeſs, as you have, you ſay, found your Father's Words a thouſand times true, *&c.* and ſo, Sir, you might your Grand-

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Grandmother's Words too, if you could remember them; but all this does not excuſe your not endeavouring, according to your Opportunities and Abilities, to make them ſenſible of their Errors, if happily they may be brought to the Ackowledgment of the Truth, that whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, they may know that there was a Prophet among them. I believe if your Father, of whom I have heard a very good Character, were ſtill alive, he would tell you, that after the Conceſſions you have frankly made, both to Quakers and Preſbyterians (the two moſt conſiderable Parties among the Diſſenters) you ſhould attempt to diſpute with them, they would not only out-face and out-lung you, but alſo out-reaſon you into the Bargain: For as you maintain the Negative of the ſcriptural Preſcription and perpetual Obligation of Epiſcopacy, I cannot conceive with what Face or Aſſurance you could diſpute with a Preſbyterian about Church Government, which is the moſt material Difference between them and us, and which gives them the Denomination of Preſbyterians; for grant them that Epiſcopacy is not preſcribed in Scripture, and that its Obligation is neither neceſſary nor perpetual, and there will be a perfect Agreement between you as to that Point of Epiſcopacy. Neither can I perceive with what better Grace, or Hopes of Succeſs, you could diſpute with a Quaker, after declaring publickly, that you look upon Baptiſm and the Lord's Supper as mere Trifles and Things indifferent, and that you deſire the Diſpute about them may never come in ſight.

But, it ſeems, it was only to humour me, that you graciouſly condeſcended to diſpute a little with me, but not out of any Hopes of Succeſs, though I ſhould have a ſingle Eye, and did not aim at Victory but at Truth, becauſe, you ſay, a Man of threeſcore can hardly, if at all, be convinced, &c. Sir, if you undertook this Debate only to humour me, as if you imagined it were

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any ſort of Pleaſure to me to have any Diſpute with you, or any other, you had very little to do, and are greatly miſtaken in your Imagination; for I take no Kind of Pleaſure in having any Debate with you; and were I influenced only with the Deſire of Victory, I would not think the Credit of gaining one over you, (as great a Man as you, or any other, may fancy yourſelf to be) worth the Labour and Pains it coſt me. As to my Age, I believe the Difference between it and yours is not ſo great, but you may be as incapable of Conviction, as you fancy or imagine me to be on account of my Years; and you may be as ſenſible of Stiffneſs and Inflexibility ſtealing upon your Mind, to put a Bar to all Conviction, as I am or can be. However, be my Years either few or many, I do not think (and I believe every diſintereſted Perſon will be of the ſame Opinion) that you have hitherto advanced any one Argument capable of convincing any one, at any Period of his Life, who has any tolerable Knowledge of the Subjects of our Controverſy.

In your laſt Paragraph, you ſay you will add a few Words upon Orthodoxy, becauſe it is of the laſt Importance, *&c.* And yet as great as the Importance of it is, you have not added one Grain of Weight more to the Scale in this than you did in your former Letter; you only ſing the ſame Song over again, without ever taking the leaſt Notice of what I wrote to you in my ſecond Letter, in Anſwer to it; in which I think I did evidently prove, that Orthodoxy was a moſt neceſſary and eſſential Part of Religion, even as neceſſary as Faith, without which it is impoſſible to pleaſe God; and that by ſuch Arguments as I find you are not able to anſwer, otherwiſe I cannot conceive why you did not put in ſome Kind of Anſwer to them; but inſtead of that which was Incumbent on you to do, if it was in your Power, you content yourſelf only with telling me (as you did before) what you mean by a Child of God, and what by a Child of the Devil; and

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and therefore if my Aim was only Victory, I might without giving myſelf any further Trouble, take my Leave both of you and the Controverſy together, and ſo leave the Reader to judge whether you or I beſt deſerve the Application of your old Man's *Latin* Motto, *Non perſuadebis etiamſi perſuaſeris.*

But becauſe this Part of our Diſpute is indeed, as you ſay, of the laſt and greateſt Importance, and that my Aim is not Victory, but that Truth may prevail; and eſpecially, becauſe for Want of any other Topicks of Argumentation, you have, in a Manner very unbecoming either a Gentleman, a Scholar, or a Chriſtian, betaken yourſelf to Scandal and perſonal Reflection, I am content to continue the Debate a little farther, and to endeavour, if poſſible, to convince you of the dangerous and pernicious Conſequence of this Maxim.

In your ſeventh Paragraph, you furniſh me with three ſeveral Definitions of the Religion of a Child of God, the firſt is, that it is Righteouſneſs, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt; ſecondly, that it is the Love of God and Man, producing all Holineſs of Converſation; and laſtly, that it is the Mind that was in Chriſt, and walking as he walked; and of each of theſe Definitions, you affirm ſeverally and diſtinctly, that Orthodoxy is but a very ſlender Part of either, queſtioning at each Time, whether it be any Part at all of it. But in Anſwer to this, I muſt obſerve, that in all theſe Definitions, you either artfully, or through an Error, or Miſtake of your Judgment, miſtake the Fruits and Effects, or Rewards of Religion for Religion itſelf; for Righteouſneſs, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt, Love of God and Man, ſtrictly and properly ſpeaking, are only the Fruits and Effects of Religion, and differ from it, juſt as the Concluſion differs from the Principle from whence it is deduced, or the Effect from the Cauſe.

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RELIGION, as I told you in my former Letter, is the entertaining ſuch orthodox Notions and Sentiments of the Supreme Being, his Nature, Attributes, and Words, as produce thoſe Fruits and Effects in us, which you miſtake and confound with Religion itſelf; and it does as naturally do ſo in every one *Obicem non ponente*, that does not put a Bar to it, by the Depravity of his own corrupt Will and Affections; as a Tree brings forth its natural Fruit, if no Injury of Weather, or an unnatural Seaſon, prevents or obſtructs it. So that the entertaining of ſound and orthodox Sentiments of the Nature, Attributes, and Word of God, is the very Soul and Foundation of all Religion, which produces thoſe Fruits and Effects of it mentioned by you, in every one that does not put a Bar to it, by the Depravity of his own corrupt Will and Affections; and conſequently Orthodoxy is a moſt neceſſary and eſſential Part of Religion, without which we cannot have thoſe Effects of it, miſtaken by you for Religion itſelf. As for Inſtance, what Peace or Joy could you have in the Holy Ghoſt, if you had not a right Belief of his Nature, Perſon, or Office? Suppoſe you were an Eunomian, or Socinian Heretick, what Joy or Comfort could you have in the Holy Ghoſt, if with the firſt you believed him to be a mere Creature, or with the laſt to be only a Quality of the Divine Nature, without any perſonal Subſiſtance? How could you love, fear, or ſerve God, in a way ſuitable to his Will and Word, if you entertained wrong Notions, either of Himſelf, his Attributes, his Purpoſes or Decrees? Suppoſe a rigid Calviniſt who believes abſolute and unconditional Predeſtination and Reprobation, how could ſuch an one have a cordial Love for him? fear him, I grant, he might as a cruel Tyrant, who without any other Motive, but his own mere Will and Pleaſure, and to ſhew his Power, did from all Eternity, without any Regard to their good or bad Actions, irreverſibly and irrevocably doom

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doom the greateſt Part of his Creatures, to eternal Damnation. So that you ſee, Sir, that orthodox Sentiments are the very Soul and prolifick Principle of all Religion, without which we can neither love, fear, or ſerve God as we ſhould do, and conſequently, that Orthodoxy is a moſt neceſſary and eſſential Part of Religion.

By a Child of the Devil, you ſay, you mean one that neither loves, fears, or ſerves God, yet ſuch a Man may be orthodox, and entertain true Opinions; and yet it is equally certain, that theſe can be no Parts of Religion, in him that has no Religion at all. I wiſh, Sir, you would forget your Sophiſtry, and not endeavour, by ſuch Sophiſms to impoſe upon yourſelf or others; for this Argument of yours proceeds, as the Logicians ſpeak, *a dicto Simpliciter, ad Dictum ſecundum Quid*, which you that either are, or ſometimes were a Fellow of *Oxford*, muſt know to be falſe Reaſoning, that is in plain *Engliſh*, when the Queſtion between you and me is, Whether Orthodoxy, ſimply and abſolutely without any Reſpect or Relation to this or that Perſon, of this or that Qualification, be a Part of Religion you endeavour to prove, that it is not, becauſe it is no Part of it in him that has no Religion at all; than which there cannot well be a more fallacious Piece of Sophiſtry. But, Sir, tho' a Child of the Devil has not the Fruits and Effects of Religion, that is, tho' his Orthodoxy does not produce the ſaving Love and Fear of God in him, becauſe he puts a Bar to it by the Depravity of his corrupt Will and Affections, why may it not be in itſelf really and truly a moſt neceſſary Part of Religion, as Faith tho' it does not in all Men operate by Love, is yet a neceſſary Part of Religion, tho' to him of no Uſe or Advantage, becauſe it doth not produce in him thoſe Effects and Fruits of Religion which you mention; for as Reaſon is indiſputably eſſential to Man, tho' natural Idiots, or Madmen have not the Uſe of it; ſo Orthodoxy,

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Orthodoxy, or right believing, is eſſential to Religion, tho' a Child of the Devil puts a Bar to its Influences by the Depravity of his corrupt Will and Affections.

In the Cloſe of your Letter, you crave Permiſſion to ſpeak exceeding plainly, and, to do you Juſtice, you do ſo to a very great Degree of Scurrility, and in a manner unbecoming your Character. You ſuppoſe then that I may be very orthodox, and yet poſſibly I may have no more Religion than the Devil or his Angels, if it be true that I frequently drink to Exceſs, and that in my Paſſion I call my Brother a Fool, and take God's Name in vain. But, Sir, what if, inſtead of being true, all this be ſcandalouſly and notoriouſly falſe, what manner of Man muſt the World take you to be, thus (even hypothetically) to aſperſe a Brother Clergyman, of whom and with whom you had no ſort of perſonal Knowledge or Acquaintance, to intitle you, with any Aſſurance of Truth, to charge him with ſuch Immoralities? and conſequently for which you could have no other Authority, but the falſe Information of ſome of your Diſciples, who for the Oppoſition I gave them, would not ſcruple to make Mountains of Mole-Hills, and improve the moſt innocent Liberty, into an immoral Crime? Suppoſe, Sir, I could prevail with myſelf to follow the Example you have ſet me, and to give you a Yard of your own Meaſure, and tell you, that tho' you never drank any thing but Water, and never in Paſſion or otherwiſe took God's Name in vain, yet it is poſſible (according to your own way of reaſoning) you may have no more Religion than the Devil or his Angels, if it be true, that having inveigled a young Lady with fourteen thouſand Pounds fortune to marry you, you in a little Time quitted and turned her off, giving her only four thouſand Pounds of her Fortune, reſerving the reſt for charitable Uſes, upon Pretence that the married State was incompatible with the Diſcharge of the Apoſtolick

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Apoſtolick Miſſion, which you took upon yourſelf; that you afterwards lived in Adultery with another Man's Wife, and that even when you were laſt in this Kingdom, you carried off conſiderable Sums of Money that were collected in your Societies in *Dublin*, for charitable Uſes among themſelves: Suppoſe, I ſay, I ſhould return upon you in this Manner, (tho' I have heard all theſe things reported of you) would not you, and very juſtly, think me a very bad Man and that I had done you a very great Injury? I do not hint theſe Things as having any moral Aſſurance of the Truth of them, but to let you ſee how an innocent Man (as in Charity I will ſuppoſe you are) may very often be cauſelesly injured in his Reputation by malicious People; and that you ought to have conſidered that this might be my Caſe, as I can prove it to be, before you either directly or indirectly exhibited ſuch a Charge againſt a Brother Clergyman, founded only on groundleſs Hearſay or Report, which is doing that to me, which I appeal to your own Conſcience, whether you would not take it very ill in me if I did (as you ſeem to do in your Letter) ſeriouſly exhibit the above Charge againſt you; which is ſo far from being either Bible, or traditionary, or any kind of Chriſtianity, that it is not ſo much as common Honeſty, or even Heathenish Morality.

In the mean time, I am ſurprized that you who ſet up ſo much for what you call Bible Chriſtianity, ſhould forget that Precept of our Lord, *Judge*[1] *not and you ſhall not be judged, condemn not and you ſhall not be condemned, for with the ſame Meaſure you mete to others, it ſhall be meaſured to you again*; or that you did not reflect how contrary to St. *Paul*'s[m] Deſcription of the Chriſtian Grace of Charity it is, even to think, how much more to ſpeak, Evil of our Brother? and that the ſame St. *Paul*, in his paſtoral Inſtructions to *Titus*, deſires he may put the People, under his Care and Inſpection,

[1] *Matth.* vii. 1, 2. [m] 1. *Cor.* xiii. 5.

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ſpection, in mind to ſpeak [a] evil of no Man; and let me entreat you to read Doctor *Tillotſon*'s excellent Diſcourſe on the laſt quoted Text of St. *Paul*, in hopes it may prevent your being guilty of ſuch another uncharitable Crime again. And becauſe I am unwilling to be in your Debt, for any of your Civilities, or any Inſtance of your Brotherly Love, as you have very uncharitably and unjuſtly, (becauſe you did it without any Knowledge of your own) applied the Words of *David* to me, ſo you muſt pardon me if I very juſtly, becauſe I have a pregnant Demonſtration of it lying before me on the Table, apply the words of a greater than *David* to you, *Elſe how canſt thou ſay to thy Brother, Brother let me take the Mote out of thy Eye, when thou ſeeſt not the Beam that is in thine own Eye.* THOU HYPOCRITE, *firſt caſt out the Beam that is in thine own Eye, and then ſhalt thou clearly ſee to take out the Mote that is in thy Brother's Eye.* You cry out with an Exclamation, what an idle Thing is it in me to talk of Lay-preachers, for is not a Lay-preacher preferable to a drunken, *&c.* Preacher? But without any Exclamation, let me aſk you calmly, whether it be not more idle, more ſenſeleſs, and indeed more uncharitable in you to be making odious Compariſons, when the Queſtion is not which is preferable, but when the Queſtion is, Whether a Layman, without any direct or ſpecial Call from Heaven, or a legal Miſſion from the Governors of the Church, may lawfully take upon himſelf the Office of a publick Preacher of God's Word in the Church; and whether your allowing ſuch Preachers, be conſiſtent with your Acknowledgement, that you have no Exception to the twenty-third Article, which condemns them. To clear this Inconſiſtency was what you ought to have done, if you could, and not make odious Compariſons, which, however true, are nothing to the Purpoſe; for tho' a ſober Layman is a better Man than an intemperate (tho'

[a] *Tit.* iii. 2.

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(tho' never ſo well authoriſed) Preacher, yet it does not therefore follow, that a mere Layman may lawfully preſume to be a publick Preacher of God's Word in the Church.

In the mean time, as to myſelf, let me be as I will, to my own Maſter I ſtand or fall; neither do I regard being judged by you or any other, ſo long as my own Conſcience acquits me; and I do aſſure you, Sir, that I had much rather take my Chance with the poor Publican in the Parable, who went to the Temple to pray with a Phariſee, and would not ſo much as lift up his Eyes to Heaven, but ſmiting his Breaſt cried, *God be merciful to me a Sinner*, than with any Phariſee, whether Jewiſh or Chriſtian, who boaſts of his own Righteouſneſs, and not only deſpiſes, but alſo falſely accuſes and uncharitably cenſures others.

After all, whatever (in your great Charity) you may think of me, I thank God I have ſo much Chriſtianity, that I can with all Sincerity ſay the Lord's Prayer, and beg Forgiveneſs of my Sins, which I am not aſhamed to confeſs, upon no other Terms, than as I heartily forgive both you and your Informer, whoever he was, the Scandal you have endeavoured to fix upon me. And ſo, Sir, I take my Leave of you and this Diſpute together; for once an Adverſary betakes himſelf to Scandal and perſonal Reflection, I am reſolved to have no farther Dealing or Correſpondence with him, ſince, in my humble Opinion, there can hardly be any greater Sign of a bad Cauſe or a bad Man, or indeed of both together, than ſuch a poor, unmanly, and unchriſtian Behaviour. I am,

Reverend Sir,

Hollymount,
Sept. 30th,
1756.

Yours, &c.

J. C.

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AN APPENDIX TO MONTANUS REDIVIVUS:

Being REMARKS upon the Revd. Mr. SHIRLEY, Rector of LOUGHREA, his late Sermon on the *Miniſtry of the Goſpel*, in a Letter to the Revd. Dean CROWE, by the Author of MONTANUS, *&c.*

Reverend and Worthy Sir,

WHEN I received your Favour, with Mr. *Shirley*'s late Sermon, on the Miniſtry of the Goſpel, encloſed, I remember, that in Anſwer, I hinted, or rather promiſed, that I would give you my Sentiments and Opinion of it; and altho' upon a careful Peruſal of it, I found nothing equal to the mighty Brags that were made of it, before it made its publick Appearance, by his late Swadling Friends, in theſe Parts, nor indeed deſerving much Conſideration; yet leſt you ſhould think me deficient in all my Promiſes, as I have been in that which I have been a long Time making, to do myſelf the Honour and Pleaſure of ſeeing you, from fulfilling which I have been hitherto, by my bad State of Health, and other unfortunate Accidents, prevented; I have preſumed to give you this Trouble, together with my Opinion of that Sermon, which I take to be in the general, full fraught with unſound and heterodox Notions, and

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and with very falſe, ſcandalous, and uncharitable Aſperſions, (not indeed fairly and above board, but by many broad Hints, and indirect Inſinuations) caſt upon his Brethren the Clergy.

If the Characters which his late Friends, the Swaddlers in this Country, induſtriouſly ſpread abroad of him, both before and ſince his Converſion, and going over to their Party, (tho' very probably both for obvious Reaſons are exaggarated beyond the Bounds of Truth) have any Truth in them, he has verified the Obſervation of the Poet, viz. *In vitium ducit Culpæ Fuga, ſi caret Arte.* And he does not ſeem to underſtand, or at leaſt he had not an Eye to, that other excellent Maxim in Morality of the ſame Poet; *Virtus eſt Medium Vitiorum, utrinque reductum*; he has, I ſay, quite forgot theſe, and, like his preſent Maſters, Mr. *W---y, &c.* he carries all Things to Extremes, and ſtrains every String he handles, till it cracks. I will not deny but he may be zealouſly affected, but whether well, let the Conſequence determine. To be zealouſly affected in a good Cauſe is, I grant, very commendable; but when Zeal is not tempered and guided by Moderation, Solidity of Judgment, and Coolneſs of Thought, it is of a very pernicious and dangerous Conſequence, and degenerates into Superſtition, Enthuſiaſm, and Uncharitableneſs.

It is really ſurprizing to conſider, with what Earneſtneſs, and Application theſe Men apply themſelves, and what Pains they take, to run down and depreciate Chriſtian Morality, or the Works of Evangelical Obedience; and preaching Juſtification by Faith alone, without any ſuch Works, as if the whole of Chriſtianity depended upon it; thus putting thoſe Things aſunder, which God has inſeparably joined together. It is for this Reaſon they have put that excellent Book, *The Whole Duty of Man*, under an *Judex expurgatorius*, and interdicted the reading of it in their Societies; becauſe he exhorts us to live ſoberly, righteouſ-

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ly and godlily in this World; whereas (ſays Mr. *Whitfield*, in his printed Sermon on the Seed of the Woman) Men ſhould not be deſired or exhorted to do this or that, but to lay hold on the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt by Faith, which will be thereupon imputed to them, and will be ſufficient, tho' they have no ſort of Righteouſneſs of their own; to depend upon which, in Whole or in Part, either as the Cauſe, or any Term or Condition of Salvation, that Gentleman declares to be no leſs then Hell-fire and Damnation.

TOWARDS carrying on this bleſſed Deſign, Mr. *Shirley* has contributed his Mite, in the Sermon under preſent Conſideration, the main and principal Deſign of which, is to prove, that preaching Morality, or the Works of Evangelical Obedience, is not preaching the Goſpel, condemning his Brethren that do preach Morality, and falſely accuſing them, that they preach nothing elſe. Now if by the Goſpel, he means the whole Goſpel, I grant that to preach Morality alone, is not to preach the Goſpel; but if his meaning be, that to preach Morality is to preach no Part of the Goſpel, I affirm it to be a moſt falſe, erroneous, and dangerous Aſſertion; for it is evidently, to preach a very conſiderable and fundamental Part of the Goſpel; it is to preach the End and Deſign of it, as old *Zachary*, the Father of *John Baptiſt*, has long ago told us; for he, by the Holy Ghoſt, aſſures us, that we were, by the Birth, and Incarnation of Chriſt, delivered and redeemed from the Hands of our Enemies, both Temporal and Spiritual, that we might from thence forward ſerve God in *Righteouſneſs*, and *Holineſs*, before him all the Days of our Lives, *Luke* i. 74, 75, St. *Paul* tells us the ſame, for Chriſt, ſays he, gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify to himſelf a peculiar, or choſen, or precious People, zealous of *Good Works*: *Tit.* ii. 14. Therefore, inſtead of finding Fault with, I humbly preſume, that Mr. *Shirley* ſhould have highly honoured and

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and eſteemed, ſuch of his Brethren, as make it their principal Study to preach true Chriſtian Morality, and a good Life; becauſe this is the End and Deſign of all Religion, eſpecially as they are not wanting or deficient, as Occaſion and Opportunity offer, to preach Faith in Chriſt, the Neceſſity of Grace, Regeneration, and the Aids and Aſſiſtance of the Spirit, in the due Uſe of the ordinary Means of Grace, and all other Myſteries of the Goſpel. They do not, it is true, neither is there any Reaſon or Neceſſity that they ſhould, make theſe the conſtant and perpetual Themes or Subjects of their Diſcourſes, as others do; for this would be to ſuppoſe that they were always preaching to *Jews*, *Heathens*, or *Mahometans*; it would be to ſuppoſe that they were to be conſtantly laying the Foundation, and never endeavour to raiſe any Superſtructure upon it; and, in a Word, it would be to ſuppoſe, that the Goſpel was ſtill in a State of Publication to an Infidel and Pagan World.

The Clergy, I ſuppoſe, take it for granted, that their Hearers have been grounded in the Knowledge and Belief of the Myſteries, and Principles of Faith, and trained up in them from their Infancy, both by their Parents, Tutors, and Paſtors; and conſequently, that their chiefeſt Care or Concern is, or ought to be, to perſwade and exhort them to bring forth Fruits anſwerable to ſuch Myſteries and Principles, in all holy and godly Converſations; in Love and Charity; in Juſtice, Temperance, Sobriety, and Chaſtity; in Meekneſs, Purity, and Humility; in Patience under Afflictions; an intire Reſignation of ourſelves to the Divine Will and Providence; and a chearful Acquieſcence in all the gracious Diſpenſations of the latter, believing and firmly perſwading ourſelves, that all Things, whether in Life or Death, in Adverſity or Proſperity, however chequered or blended together, or whatever our Lot or Portion of any or either of them may be, will in the Concluſion, and in winding up of

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the Bottom, turn out to the Benefit and Advantage, of all thoſe that ſincerely and heartily love and fear God. And in preaching theſe Things, the Clergy do but follow the Example of their Divine Lord and Maſter, and of his Holy Apoſtles. When our Saviour ſent forth his Apoſtles upon their firſt Miſſion, this was what he gave them in Charge, *Go*, ſays he, *and preach the Goſpel in every City*; but what Goſpel? Why, not Faith alone without Works, but *repent and believe the Goſpel*, and *repent for the Kingdom of Heaven*, (that is the State of the Goſpel) *is at hand.* Firſt repent, which is not a ſingle tranſient Act, but a complex Body of ſeveral, if not all, good Works, and then *believe the Goſpel.*

THE firſt Sermon (at leaſt ſo far as appears from any written Records) that our Saviour himſelf ever preached was that on the *Mount of Olives*; the whole intire Subject of which, from Beginning to Ending, is nothing elſe but Morality, raiſed to its higheſt Pitch of Perfection, and reſtored to its primitive, and original Force, Purity and Obligation; extending the latter to the very Heart and Soul, to their inmoſt Thoughts, Deſires, and Affections of Men; not terminating it on the outward or external Behaviour only, as the Heathen Philoſophers and the Scribes and Phariſees uſually did. There is not one Word in all that Divine Sermon, concerning Juſtification by Faith alone, without the Works of Evangelical Obedience, in the Propagation and Maintenance of which Doctrine, Mr. *Weſley* is ſo zealouſly ſanguine, that no Juſtification, in his Senſe, and no Chriſtianity, are with him almoſt Terms convertible and equivalent. Neither was it in this Sermon alone, that our Saviour inſiſts upon, and preaches Morality; to the contrary, the enforcing and recommending of it, is the moral Deſign of almoſt all his Parables, particularly the Parable of the Sower that went out to ſow his Seed; the prodigal Son; of the unfruitful Fig-tree, and many others.

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In a Word, he makes Morality, or the Works of Evangelical Obedience, the only Teſt and Evidence of our Love and Gratitude to himſelf; *If ye love me*, ſays he, *keep my Commandments*, *John* xiv. 15. and again, *Ye are my Friends if ye do whatſoever I command you*, *John* xv. 14. nay he reckons ſuch to be his neareſt and deareſt Relations; for being upon a certain Time told, that his Mother and his Brethren were at the Door deſiring to ſpeak with him, *Who*, ſays he, *are my Mother and my Brethren?* then looking round, and pointing to his obedient Diſciples, *Behold*, ſays he, *my Mother and my Brethren, for whoſoever doth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven, the ſame is my Mother, my Brethren and my Siſter*, *Mark* iii. 30. 31. *&c.* To conclude, he reckons all other pretences to Religion to be nothing elſe but meer Hypocriſy, and tells us, that he will not regard the Propheſying in his Name, and caſting out Devils, at the laſt Day, without the Works of Evangelical Obedience, for he will anſwer them, *Depart from me for I know you not, ye Workers of Iniquity.*

And it was the ſame Caſe with his holy Apoſtles, in their Epiſtles to the Churches, or to ſingle Perſons; for tho' the Attempts of open and barefaced Hereticks, and the ſly and more plauſible Pretences of cunning Deceivers, who came in Sheep's Cloathing, with great Pretences to Myſteries, and deep Speculations, with great Mortification and outward Shows of Devotion, in order the more ſucceſsfully to deceive ſilly and unſtable Souls, made it neceſſary for them to guard the Faithful againſt ſuch Hereticks, and Deceivers, and to confirm the genuine Doctrines, Articles, and Myſteries of the Faith againſt them; yet they generally cloſe their Epiſtles with an earneſt and pathetick Exhortation to the Performance of the Works of evangelical Obedience, and all the Virtues of a ſocial Life, whether publick or private. It would be as needleſs as endleſs to produce all the In-

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ſtances to this Purpoſe, to be met with in their Epiſtles; every one that has or will read them, will be convinced of the Truth of it. "If preaching the Goſpel, "ſays Mr. *Shirley*, conſiſted in preaching the moral "Law, I cannot ſee what Reaſon St. *Paul* had to ſup-"poſe, that any Shame would be fixed on it, eſpeci-"ally at *Rome*, *&c.*" If preaching the Goſpel conſiſted in preaching Morality or the moral Law only, and in nothing elſe, poſſibly St. *Paul* would not have been ſo apprehenſive of being ſubjected to Shame on account of it, either at *Rome* or elſewhere, as he was; but no Man ever yet pretended that preaching the moral Law was preaching the whole Goſpel, tho' the Goſpel cannot be preached without it: But there were other Things which made the Apoſtle juſtly apprehenſive of being expoſed to Scorn and Contempt, by the wiſe Men of *Rome*, as he had been already by the Philoſophers at *Athens*, namely, preaching *Jeſus*, and the Reſurrection: The preaching of a crucified Meſſias, was to the *Jews* a Stumbling-block, and a Rock of Offence; they expected a warlike Meſſias to fight their Battles, to free them from their Bondage and Subjection to the Power of the *Romans*, to ſubdue the whole World under them, and make *Jeruſalem* its Metropolis; it could never enter into their Heads, that a Meſſias who declared, that his *Kingdom was not of this World*, and that ſuffered himſelf to be crucified by the *Romans*, could do all this for them, or conſequently could be the true one; and therefore they were inſeparably prejudiced againſt him. It is well known alſo, what Scorn and Contempt the Chriſtians were every where loaded with, for worſhipping and making a God of a *Galilean*, (ſo *Julian the Apoſtate* in Deriſion uſed to call our Saviour,) who was crucified; (the moſt infamous and ignominious of all Puniſhments, both among *Jews* and *Romans*,) this was what the Apoſtle had Reaſon to expect would be, at every Turn caſt in his Teeth, by the wiſe and learned Men of

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of *Rome*, as Matter of Shame and Reproach, and of which he declares himſelf not to be one Bit aſhamed; to the contrary, it was what he gloried in, and in nothing elſe; *God forbid*, ſays he, *that I ſhould glory in any thing ſave in the Croſs of Chriſt, by whom the World is crucified to me and I to the World:* Galat. vi. 14. Neither was it for preaching a crucified Saviour alone, that St. *Paul* had Reaſon to apprehend he ſhould be loaded with Scorn and Contempt at *Rome*, but even for preaching Morality in that Height and Strictneſs, in that Purity and Spirituality, to which Chriſt raiſed it in his Sermon on the Mount, to which the greateſt Moraliſts among *Jews* or *Barbarians*, *Greeks* or *Romans*, were utter and intire Strangers: They could not conceive that cauſeleſs Anger, Wrath, Malice, or Deſire of Revenge, were Species of Murder; they had no Notion or Idea of the Adultery of the Heart or the Eyes; their Morality carried them no farther than to love their Friends, but allowed them to hate their Enemies; therefore the loving their Enemies, doing all the Good they could to them, and even praying for them, which is the Morality of the Chriſtian Diſpenſation, could not but appear ſtrange and unaccountable to the wiſeſt Sages of *Greece* or *Rome*; and therefore St. *Paul* had no leſs than Reaſon to apprehend he ſhould be the Butt of their Scorn and Deriſion, even for preaching ſuch Morality.

In a Word, as the great Dr. *Stillingfleet*, in a Sermon upon this very Text of Mr. *Shirley*'s, and out of which it had been no Shame or Diſparagement to him, to have ſcribbled ſomewhat, obſerves, " Had Chriſt " come μετα πολλης φαντασιας with great Pomp and " State into the World, ſubduing Kingdoms " and Nations under him; had St. *Paul* been a " General for the Goſpel, inſtead of an Apoſtle of it, " the great Men of the World would have acknow- " ledged, that he had no Reaſon to be aſhamed, either " of his Maſter, or his Employment under him: But

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" to preach a crucified Lord and Saviour, among the " Glories and Triumphs of *Rome*; and a Doctrine of " ſo much Humility, Simplicity, and Contempt of " the World, among thoſe who were Maſters of it, " and ruled it with ſuch Policy and Art; to perſwade " thoſe to be Followers of Chriſt, and to imitate him " in the Innocence and Holineſs of his Life, who " could not be like the Gods they ever had, and ſtill " worſhipped, without being guilty of the greateſt " Crimes, and the groſſeſt Immoralities, was likely " to be an Employment, liable not only to ſuch Scorn " and Contempt, but even to the moſt imminent " Danger and Hazard of his Life; that no one but " a Man of a great, courageous, and undaunted Spi- " rit, would ever venture to undertake it."

" THE very word Goſpel, ſays Mr. *Shirley*, re- " minds us of its proper Object, as the Meaning of it " is the good Meſſage or good News, &c. Pag. 6." Mr. *Shirley* either miſtakes, or over-looks the literal Notation of the word *Goſpel*, by which our *Engliſh* Tranſlators have expreſſed the Import, but not the literal Notation of the Word ευαγγελιον in *Greek*, and *Evangelium* in *Latin*, which I grant literally ſignifies, as Mr. *Shirley* obſerves, good Meſſage or News; or rather, as the Angels which appeared to the Shepherds in the Land of *Judæa*, at our Saviour's Nativity expreſs it, *Tidings of great Joy which ſhould be to all Nations*; for the Word Goſpel is an old *Saxon* word *(Goddſpell)* made *Engliſh*, and ſignifies literally God's Word; our *Engliſh* Tranſlation therefore properly enough renders the *Greek* ευαγγελιον or good Meſſage, by the word Goſpel or God's Word, becauſe all the Particulars of this joyful Meſſage, or good News, all its Promiſes, all its Threatenings, and all its Doctrines, Precepts, and Duties, whether of Faith or Practice, are really God's Word; for it is not a Meſſage of one but many Particulars, and all theſe Particulars are to be preached, according to their different Degrees of Neceſſity,

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Neceſſity, Uſefulneſs, and Subſerviency, one to another; and none of them to be urged, or neglected, to the manifeſt Prejudice or Neglect of another: we are to declare and publiſh the whole Meſſage, and to deliver the whole Council of Heaven concerning Man's Salvation, ſo far as it appears to us to have been revealed; otherwiſe we ſhall be reckoned unfaithful Stewards and Diſperſers of the Word of God.

I WILL put a plain and parallel Caſe. Let us ſuppoſe a City in open Rebellion againſt their lawful Sovereign, and that this Sovereign, at the Sollicitation of his Son and Heir, ſends Embaſſadors or Heralds to the Citizens with a gracious Meſſage, that if they laid down their Arms, and returned to their Allegiance, he would forgive, and not take the Forfeiture of what was paſt, upon Condition that they did for the future honour his Son as they did himſelf, and make all their Addreſſes thro' him, and pay a yearly Tax, towards the Payment of which, he would give them all the neceſſary Aids and Encouragement, and make all reaſonable and equitable Allowances for Contingencies and Neglects that were not habitual or voluntarily perſiſted in: Now if theſe Embaſſadors or Heralds ſhould only deliver the firſt Part of the Meſſage, and conceal the other, *i. e.* the Payment of the Tax, or ſeldom mention it, and when they did, but very ſlightingly, as a thing no way neceſſary or obligatory towards obtaining their Prince's Amneſty, or the Continuance of it, *&c.* they would, I confeſs, bring very acceptable News to the Citizens, but I doubt not a true one, and conſequently might be juſtly charged with Unfaithfulneſs in diſcharging the Truſt that was repoſed in them. The Application of this ſuppoſed Caſe, to the Caſe in Hand, is ſo obvious, that it is needleſs to inlarge farther upon it. "Now, ſays Mr. "*Shirley*, if any Miniſter of God's Word ſhould come "to you, and ſet before you the pure and perfect Law "of Righteouſneſs, an intire and perfect Obedience "which can alone intitle you to everlaſting Salva-

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" tion, &c. If any one ſhould repreſent your moral " Duty to you in this true Light, and at the ſame " time not repreſent unto you the ſupernatural Pow- " ers and Privileges offered to you in the Goſpel, to " enable you to perform the ſame perfectly, inſtead of " good he would bring very bad News to the Ears of " Fleſh and Blood, &c." *Ibid. ubi ſupra.*

Mr. *Shirley*, in the Advertiſement before his printed Sermon, declares, that he has not joined himſelf to any Sect or Party, but adheres to the Tenets of the Church of *Ireland*, and endeavours to preach them in their primitive Purity, and ſo indeed ſay they all; nay, they do with great Confidence and Aſſurance pretend, that they are the only true Preachers of the Doctrines; but I may juſtly ſay, *Ut quid verba audiam quum facta videam?* For theſe Pretences and Declarations are evidently nothing elſe but ſo many Proteſtations againſt plain Facts; and for Proof of this, I need go no farther than the above Paragraph of Mr. *Shirley*'s Sermon, wherein he moſt evidently forſakes the Doctrine of the Church, and joins himſelf with the Swadlers, (if holding and maintaining their peculiar Doctrines, as Swadlers, may be deemed joining with them) for he therein manifeſtly pleads for a ſinleſs and perfect Obedience to the Law of Righteouſneſs, in its full Extent, as neceſſary to everlaſting Salvation; that is, in a Word, he pleads for ſinleſs Perfection, which is a main and fundamental Principle of Methodiſm, a Tenet which flies directly in the Face of ſeveral Texts of Scripture, and is confuted by the Lives of the greateſt Saints that ever were upon the Face of the Earth, under any Diſpenſation or Oeconomy of God's Church, whether patriarchal, *Moſaical*, or evangelical. *Enoch*, *Noah*, *Job*, *Abraham* the Father of the Faithful, *Moſes*, *Daniel*, *David*, *Zacharias* the Father of the Baptiſt, the Apoſtles *Peter*, *Paul*, *Barnabas*, &c. of all theſe, I ſay, the Oracles of Truth bear Witneſs, that they had their Failings,

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Infirmities, and Imperfections, and came far ſhort of a ſinleſs Perfection. In a Word, it is a Tenet of the Pelagian Hereſy, againſt which all the antient Fathers and Councils that oppoſed that Hereſy, have borne Teſtimony; and our own excellent Church of *Ireland*, following their Example, has clearly expreſſed and declared herſelf againſt it; for in the 15th Article of the Church of *England*, which ſhe hath in her Canons adopted as her Senſe and Judgment, the Title of which is, *Chriſt alone without Sin*, after eſtabliſhing the ſinleſs Perfection and ſpotleſs Innocence of our Saviour, ſhe expreſſes herſelf in theſe very Words, "But "all the reſt (tho' baptiſed and born again in Chriſt) "yet offend in many Things; and if we ſay that we "have no Sin, we deceive ourſelves, and the Truth "is not in us."

Now it is plain from the foregoing Paragraph, that Mr. *Shirley* ſuppoſes, or rather affirms, that we not only may, but are obliged to obey the Law of Righteouſneſs perfectly, and conſequently not only may, but muſt attain a ſinleſs Perfection, in order to intitle us to everlaſting Happineſs; which is quite blank againſt the above Article of our Church; and then let the World judge how faithfully he adheres to and preaches her Tenets. And to ſhow his Meaning more plainly he quotes ſome Texts of Scripture, to prove that we muſt obey the Law of Righteouſneſs perfectly, or with a ſinleſs Perfection; the firſt Text is, that *without Holineſs no Man ſhall ſee the Lord.* But is it not amazing to hear Mr. *Shirley*, in the very Face of this Text, affirming, that preaching Morality is not preaching the Goſpel, and tacitly condemning his Brethren that do ſo? For I would fain know from him, what is Holineſs but Chriſtian Morality, I mean Faith, Hope, Charity, Juſtice, Temperance, Chaſtity, Purity, and Devotion, *&c.* and ſince *without Holineſs*, the Apoſtle is poſitive, *no Man ſhall ſee the Lord*, what can be more neceſſary, or more the conſtant En-

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Endeavours of the Miniſters of God's Word, at all Times and upon all Occaſions, than to preach and recommend to their Hearers the above Works of Chriſtian Morality.

But to return to the Text: To which I anſwer, that without Holineſs in Heart, in Deſire and Affection, and in the Habit and main and principal Courſe and Tenour of our Lives, ſo as that it be the prevailing and predominant Principle of them, we neither can nor ſhall ſee the Lord: But without a perfect, ſpotleſs, and ſinleſs Holineſs in every poſſible Inſtance and Degree, we may and ſhall, through the Grace and Mercy of God in and through Chriſt, ſee the Lord, otherwiſe no Man living ever was or can be ſaved; for no Man ever did or ever will attain to ſuch a Degree of perfect Holineſs in this Life (the Son of God in our Nature only excepted, whoſe peculiar Prerogative and Privilege it was, above all the Sons of *Adam*, to be perfectly holy, harmleſs, undefiled, and ſeparate from Sinners) and therefore no Man may, without ſacrilegious Blaſphemy, aſſume that Privilege and Prerogative to himſelf. It is therefore no way inconſiſtent with that Holineſs required from us, in order to intitle us to the Viſion of God, that we do ſometimes through Ignorance, Infirmity, or Surprize, deviate from the Perfection of Obedience to the Law of Righteouſneſs, provided it be, as ſoon as recollected or perceived, immediately confeſſed and repented of, if otherwiſe in the main Habit and Courſe of our Lives we be holy and righteous, otherwiſe to what Purpoſe is Repentance? Or does Mr. *Shirley*, with the *Novatians*, allow but of one Repentance, before Baptiſm or the Reception of the Holy Ghoſt? Or let him tell us why the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was inſtituted, as for other Ends and Purpoſes, ſo eſpecially for the Renewal of our Baptiſmal Covenant, if it was not that our Lord ſaw we could not attain to a ſinleſs Perfection, in a Way conſiſtent with the Freedom of our

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our Wills and the Liberty of our Elections; and therefore he graciously allowed us the Benefit of Repentance, and the Privilege of renewing our Baptismal Covenant in the holy Sacrament of the Eucharist; all which plainly supposes, or rather necessarly infers, that as God saw we could not attain, so he neither expects or requires a sinless Perfection of Obedience to the Law of Righteousness from us.

LASTLY, I would ask Mr. *Shirley* why our Saviour commanded us to pray for daily Remission of our Sins, as well as for our daily Bread, if he did not see that we should have daily Need of the one as well and as much as of the other; and consequently that we neither could attain to, nor did he expect or require a sinless Perfection of Obedience from us. This brings to my Mind a beautiful Passage out of St. *Austin*, in 31 *Serm. de Verb. Apost.* "Hæretici Pelagiani et Cælesti-
"ani dicunt Justos in hac Vita peccatum non habere,
"redi, Hæretice, ad Orationem Dominicam dimitte
"nobis debita nostra, *&c.*" "The Pelagian and
"Cælestinian Hereticks (says the Father) do say, that
"the Just in this Life do not sin; turn, thou Here-
"tick to that Petition in the Lord's Prayer, *Forgive*
"*us our Trespasses*, &c. Dost thou repeat this Peti-
"tion, or dost thou not? If thou dost, confess thy-
"self a Sinner; if not, then though thou art bodily
"present with the Church, yet in Spirit thou art
"*foris*, that is, out of and separated from her Com-
"munion, *hæc enim est Oratio Ecclesiæ Vox a Magiste-*
"*rio Domini veniens*, &c. for this is the Prayer of the
"Church, it comes from the Authority of our Lord,
"*Ipse dixit sic orate*, he himself said, *After this Man-*
"*ner pray ye*; *dixit Discipulis*, *dixit Apostolis*, &c. he
"said it to his Disciples, he said it to his Apostles;
"*dixit nobis (qualescunque sumus) Agnunculis*; he said
"it to us little Lambs, of what Quality soever we
"are; *dixit Arietibus*; he said it to the Rams, that is,
"to the Bishops or Leaders of the Flock; *videte*
"*igitur*

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" *igitur quis et quibus dixit, Veritas Discipulis dixit,* " *Pastor Pastorum Arietibus dixit,* &c. Consider there- " fore who it was that said it, and to whom it was " said; Truth said it to his Disciples, the Shepherd " of Shepherds said it to the Rams, *After this Man-* " *ner pray ye,* &c. *Forgive us our Trespasses*; the King " said it to his Soldiers, the Lord to his Servants, " Christ to his Apostles; it was the Truth that spoke " it to Men, he said to High and Low, &c. *Hæc* " *enim est Oratio Regeneratorum, et quod omnium majus* " *est, hæc est Oratio filiorum Dei, aliter enim qua Fronte* " *dicitur Pater noster,* &c. for this is the Prayer of " the Regenerate, and which is most of all, this is " the Prayer of the Sons of God, otherwise with " what Face can they say, *Our Father which art in* " *Heaven.*" Thus far St. *Austin.*

Now the plain Drift of all this Discourse, of this great Saint and learned Father, is to show that all Men, and all Degrees of them, whether Apostles or Bishops, *&c.* are daily Sinners, and consequently stand in daily Need to pray for the Forgiveness of their Trespasses: And accordingly the same Father tells us, that one of the three Articles which the Church defended and maintained against the Pelagians was this, " That " how great soever the Righteousness of the Just or " Regenerate may be, yet no Man, whilst he con- " verses in this mortal Body, can live without Sin;" and this I observe to let Mr. *Shirley* know, that it will avail him nothing to plead for himself, that the Pelagians pretended to this Exemption from Sin, by the mere Power of Nature without Grace; but that he disclaims that Principle, because he holds the Necessity of Grace, *&c.* for he may see that the Church of all Ages, and our own Church in particular, condemns this arrogant and blasphemous Pretence to a total Exemption from Sin, or to a sinless Perfection, even in the Regenerate or those that were born again in Christ, tho' he were an Apostle, *&c.*

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If I might presume to advise Mr. *Shirley*, he would not rely so much upon the Authority of his late Masters and Directors, but rather follow the Scripture Advice: Let him remember the Days of old, let him consider the Years of many Generations; let him ask the Fathers and they will shew him, and his Elders, and they will tell him, the Way he should walk in, *Deut.* xxxii. 7. in a Word, let him read Dr. *Field*'s excellent Appendix to his third Book, *Of the Church in the Article of Justification*, where he will find this Branch of the Pelagian Heresy, that the Just or Regenerate may live without committing Sin, (and which the Methodists have licked up from these Hereticks) condemned by the whole Church of God in all Ages, and by all Divines antient and modern, both Popish and Protestant, *&c.*

Mr. *Shirley*'s next Text will admit of a quicker Dispatch, and it is this; *He that keepeth the whole Law, and yet offendeth in one Point, is guilty of all*; whence I suppose it is concluded, that we must keep all or none, and consequently must attain a sinless Perfection. But this Text does by no Means prove, that a perfect and sinless Obedience is either possible or necessary; for it implies no more than that an habitual Transgression of, or an obstinate Continuance in any one known Sin, will as certainly damn a Man as if he had habitually transgressed the whole ten Commandments; he will, without Repentance, receive Damnation it is true, but not so great an one; for there are Degrees of Damnation, and some will be beat with many, and some with few Stripes; and God forbid that he who steals a Loaf should be guilty of Murder or Adultery, or suffer for the Guilt of them. So then the Apostle speaks only of the habitual Transgression of any one known Command, and an obstinate Continuance in such Transgression without Repentance; but not of a casual or accidental Violation of it, thro' Ignorance, Infirmity, or Surprize, and which is immediately

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mediately confeſſed and repented of, and conſequently forgiven; for in this Senſe all the Commandments may be ſaid to be fulfilled, according to St. *Auſtin*, *Omnia Mandata facta deputantur cum quæ infecta ſunt remittuntur*, that is, All God's Commandments are deemed to be fulfilled, when ſuch as are not fulfilled are forgiven.

Mr. *Shirley*'s laſt Text is, *He that breaketh one of the leaſt Commandments, ſhall be called the leaſt in the Kingdom of Heaven.* But here he has omitted a Word or two (whether deſignedly or not I will not ſay) which renders this Text intirely uſeleſs to his Purpoſe; for the Text intire ſtands thus, *He that breaketh one of the leaſt Commandments, and ſhall teach Men ſo to do, ſhall be called the leaſt in the Kingdom of Heaven:* Now theſe Words, *and ſhall teach Men ſo to do*, which Mr. *Shirley*, very conveniently for himſelf, has omitted, do lead us by the Hand to a plain and obvious Anſwer; for the plain Meaning of the Text taken intire is this; He that cancels or denies the binding Force or Obligation of the leaſt Commandment, and under that Pretence either tranſgreſſes it himſelf, or teaches and encourages others to do ſo without Scruple, ſhall be the leaſt in the Kingdom of Heaven. And that this is and muſt be the Meaning of the Text, will appear from the Occaſion of it: Our Lord was falſely and maliciouſly accuſed and cenſured by the Scribes and Phariſees as a Man of looſe Principles, and that his avowed Deſign was to cancel the Law and the Prophets, and the Obligation of Obedience to the Precepts of both, and conſequently to open a wide Gap to all manner of Licentiouſneſs and Immorality. In order to clear himſelf of this ſcandalous Aſperſion, our Lord tells his Hearers, *Think not*, ſays he, *that I am come to deſtroy the Law and the Prophets*, as the Scribes and Phariſees falſely accuſe me, ſo far am I from any ſuch Deſign, that I tell you plainly, *unleſs your Righteouſneſs ſhall exceed the Righteouſneſs of* theſe very

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very *Scribes and Pharisees*, notwithstanding the high Opinion they have of their own Righteousness above all others, *ye shall in no Case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*; and I am so far from cancelling the Obligation or binding Force of the least Commandment of the Law or the Prophets, or dispensing with the Breach of it as not obligatory, that whoever does, under that Pretence, break any of them, and shall by Word or Example teach others to do so, shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. Now who sees not the vast Difference between breaking a Command, either great or small, as not obligatory or binding, and breaking it thro' Infirmity, Ignorance, or Surprize? and consequently, who sees not that the former may justly not only be called (if they be not the same) the least in, but also be excluded from the Kingdom of Heaven; and yet the latter upon Repentance, thro' the Grace, Equity, and Mercy of the Gospel in Christ, be admitted and received into it?

Before I quit this Paragraph of Mr. *Shirley*'s Sermon, I cannot but observe a Side-stroke aimed and directed at his Brethren the Clergy; for he very plainly insinuates, that they do not truly represent to their Hearers the Nature of their Obligation to obey the perfect Law of Righteousness, nor acquaint them with the supernatural Powers and Privileges offered them in the Gospel, to enable them to obey that Law with a perfect Obedience. To this invidious and scandalous Aspersion I can answer for myself, and I am sure may do so for all my Brethren, with whose Writings or personal Labours I have had any Acquaintance, that we do truly and sincerely represent to our Hearers, their Duty and Obligation to obey the Laws of Righteousness, according to their Powers and Abilities; and that we do by no Means omit acquainting them with the superior Aids of Grace and Assistance of the Spirit, offered in the Gospel to all that earnestly pray for, and humbly rely and depend upon them, to dispose,

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poſe, help, and enable them, with their own Concurrence, to obey them; but as to any ſupernatural (of which more hereafter) Powers, as that means miraculous, we think we have no Warrant to flatter them with any ſuch Powers or Privileges. We very well know that the Law in itſelf is inflexible and inexorable, and requires an exact, perfect, and ſinleſs Obedience in every poſſible Degree, even to the leaſt Jot or Tittle of it; and that when this Law was firſt given to Man, he had ſufficient Power and Ability to pay that Obedience if he would, but no Promiſe or Security that he ſhould always will to do ſo, being left to the Freedom of his own Will and the Liberty of his Election, either to ſtand by his voluntary Obedience, or to fall by his voluntary Diſobedience; and that having, in Conſequence of that Freedom, willed the latter, he loſt the original Righteouſneſs and Perfection of his Nature, both for himſelf, and all who ſhould ever after proceed from his Loins, by natural Generation, to the End of the World; and ſo he and all his Poſterity for ever after became not only incapable (of themſelves) to pay that ſinleſs and perfect Obedience which the Law required, but alſo became juſtly liable to the Penalty annexed to the Breach of the Law, namely, Death both temporal and eternal. In this forlorn Condition God took Pity on fallen Man, and entered into a ſecond Covenant with him in Chriſt; the Conditions on God's Part being, that Chriſt, as Mediator between God and Man, ſhould, in the appointed Time of his Father, take human Nature upon him, and in that Nature pay that ſinleſs and perfect Obedience which the Law required, and which we, in the State of our fallen and corrupted Nature, were no longer able to pay, and to ſuffer Death on the Croſs, thereby to ſatisfy the Juſtice of his Father, by making, by one Offering of himſelf, a full, perfect, and ſufficient Sacrifice, Oblation, and Satisfaction for the Sins of the whole World; and that Man, now fallen from the original

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original Righteouſneſs and Perfection of his Nature, ſhould be received to Mercy on account of Chriſt's perfect Righteouſneſs and Obedience, and the Merits of his Death and Paſſion, upon the Terms and Condition (on Man's part) of Repentance towards God, and Faith towards our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, togetherwith an hearty and ſincere (but imperfect) Obedience to his Commands for the Time to come; with a Promiſe (on God's part) of ſufficient Aids of Grace, if compliſed with, to enable him to do ſo.

Now the Neceſſity of this Method or Oeconomy of our Redemption appears from hence, that otherwiſe the adorable Attributes of God, his Juſtice, Truth, and Mercy, could not upon any other Scheme have been reconciled to each other, or be manifeſted to the World. This is beautifully repreſented and deſcribed by a great and learned School Divine of the Church of *Rome:* "When God (ſays this Divine) "firſt created *Adam*, he endowed him with many "excellent Gifts and Graces, he gave him Juſtice to "direct him, Truth to inſtruct him, Mercy to pre-"ſerve him, and Peace to comfort and delight him; "but no ſooner did Man fall, and diſobeyed, than all "theſe Graces and Virtues left and forſook him, "and returning to God that gave them, reported "what had befallen Man on Earth, all earneſtly (but "in a very different manner) ſolliciting the Almighty "concerning Man, thus involved in Sin and Miſery: "Juſtice loudly called for the immediate Execution "of the Sentence, *Let him die the Death:* Truth as "earneſtly demanded the inflicting the threatened "Puniſhment; on the other Hand, Mercy as loudly "and earneſtly pleaded for Pity and Compaſſion to "Man, formed out of the Duſt of the Earth, and "deceived by the Craft of the old Serpent, *Satan*; "and Peace pleaded for a Reconciliation, and endea-"voured to pacify the Wrath of God, conceived "againſt his poor Creature, the Work of his own

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" Hand: They were all urgent in their ſeveral and " contradictory Demands, and theſe Demands all ne- " ceſſary for the Manifeſtation of the Glory of God, " and of his Attributes; but here lay the grand Dif- " ficulty, if God complied with any or either of them " abſolutely, the other muſt have been unſatisfied, " and never taken Notice of: Upon this intricate " Caſe, God the Father calls a Cabinet Council " of the other two Perſons of the Holy Trinity, " and after mature Deliberation, of the ſeveral " and contradictory Demands of theſe powerful Orators, " it was reſolved, that the Son of God, the ſecond Per- " ſon of the Trinity, ſhould take upon him the Nature " of Man, that ſo he might partake of his Miſeries and " ſubject himſelf to the Puniſhment juſtly deſerved by " Man, and that Man ſhould be received to Mercy, up- " on the Terms of Faith and Repentance, which lat- " ter was not allowed him before. And thus the con- " tradictory Demands, of theſe earneſt Solicitors, were " all ſatisfied. Man was puniſhed in Chriſt, as Juſ- " tice demanded; what was threatened was executed, " as Truth would have it; the Sinner was pitied and " pardoned, as Mercy pleaded, and God and Man " reconciled, as Peace requeſted; and thus that of " the Royal Prophet *Pſal.* xxv. 16. viz. *Mercy and* " *Truth were met together, and Peace and Righteouſ-* " *neſs* (or Juſtice) *have kiſſed each other*, was eminently " fulfilled." *Camaracen in Senten. Lib. 3. in Initio.*

How wonderfully great and ſurpriſing was this Scheme for the Redemption of Mankind! and how impoſſible would it have been for any other but the Divine Wiſdom to contrive Means to ſatisfy all the foregoing Attributes, without interfering with, or incroaching upon the Intereſts of each other, and at the ſame time to twiſt and interweave his own Glory among them all; and from this Scheme we may account for all the Myſteries of the Incarnation, Death, and Paſſion of our bleſſed Saviour; for 1. a Mediator,

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or Medium, that is, to bring the Extremes together, ought to partake of the Nature, and have Concern for and in the Intereſts of both: Now the Extremes were God and Man at Variance with each other, and therefore it was neceſſary that the Mediator between them ſhould be God and Man, and ſo be Partaker of the Nature, and be concerned for and in the reſpective Intereſts of both; which accordingly was done, by the Union of the Divine and Human Nature, in the Perſon of Chriſt at his Incarnation. 2. As God could not forgive Man, without due Satisfaction to his Truth, and Juſtice, therefore it was neceſſary that this Mediator ſhould make this Satisfaction, (Man in himſelf being utterly incapable of it) which he performed by ſuffering Death on the Croſs; the infinite Dignity of his Perſon, being God-Man, giving an infinite Value to his Sufferings, ſo that the leaſt Drop of his Blood was ſufficient Satisfaction, not only for the Sins of this, but for the Sins of ten thouſand times ten thouſand Worlds, if there had been ſo many Worlds to be redeemed. Laſtly, becauſe if this Mediator had taken our Nature upon him, in the ordinary way of Generation, he muſt have partaken of the Corruption of it, and ſo could not ſatisfy the Juſtice of God for the Sins of others; for had he the leaſt Stain or Corruption of his own, he could not do that, therefore it was neceſſary he ſhould be born of a pure and ſpotleſs Virgin, without the intervention of Man, by the miraculous Power of the Holy Ghoſt. And thus we ſee how all the Parts and Myſteries of Chriſt's Incarnation, depend upon each other, and are ſo cloſely and neceſſarily connected, that by takeing away any one, all the reſt fall to the Ground.

Let us now proceed, and conſider Mr. *Shirley*'s Scheme of the Incarnation, the Account he gives of it, and the Ends and Deſigns he aſſigns to it. Now the ſole End and Deſign which, in this Sermon at leaſt, he aſſigns to the Incarnation of Chriſt, is only that

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we might be endowed, with a ſupernatural Power to obey the Laws of Righteouſneſs, with a ſinleſs Perfection; he never ſo much as once makes the leaſt mention of ſatisfying the Juſtice of his Father, or offering himſelf a Sacrifice of Atonement, for the Sins of the World, on the Altar of the Croſs, as any End of the Incarnation of Chriſt, or of his Sufferings. This I ſuppoſe he ſucked in from Mr. *Hervey*'s Dialogues, between *Theron* and *Aſpaſio*, for which he (Mr. *Hervey*) is very juſtly cenſured by Mr. *W----y* himſelf, in his Remarks upon ſaid Dialogues; for Mr. *Shirley* having, from his late Maſters, and Directors, laid it down as a Principle, that we may and muſt obey the Laws of Righteouſneſs with a ſinleſs Perfection and Obedience, and it being certain, and confeſſed by all, that it is not in the Power of any of the Sons of *Adam*, deſcending from him by natural Generation, to obey the whole, or even the leaſt Part of the Law, in an holy and acceptable Manner, by the mere Power of Nature alone; therefore, ſays he, our Nature muſt be rendered capable to perform the whole Law with a ſinleſs Perfection, by ſome powerful and miraculous Means. "Here (ſays he) the Myſtery of our Redemption is at once laid open to us, and the Reaſons of our Saviour's Incarnation and Sufferings appear neceſſary, and divinely glorious, *&c.*" pag. 8. Again: "See here (ſays he) the Reaſon of Chriſt's Incarnation, that he might communicate the divine Life to the Nature of Man: See the Reaſon of his Sufferings, that he might ſuppreſs, mortify, and overcome the earthly Life, *&c.* See the Reaſon of his Death, that he might ſubdue the earthly Life, in every poſſible Reſpect." Pag. 9.

AND is this, indeed, the only Reaſon of Chriſt's Incarnation, Death, and Sufferings, which Mr. *Shirley* knows or allows of, namely, to mortify the earthly Life in us, by the Spirit and Grace of Regeneration? What is become of ſatisfying the Juſtice of his Father,

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Father, and making a full, perfect, and ſufficient Sacrifice, Oblation, and Satisfaction, for the Sins of the World, which were hitherto wont to be aſſigned as the chief and principal End, and Deſign, nay, the very fundamental Cauſe, of Chriſt's Incarnation, Death and Sufferings, by all Divines, and all Chriſtians, till theſe new Maſters, and Dictators in Divinity, theſe pretended πνευματικοι, or inſpired Men, roſe up among us, to teach us a new and ſtrange Divinity? How does, (or indeed can) Mr. *Shirley*, or rather his late Maſters and Directors, account for the ſatisfying thoſe divine Attributes of God, his Juſtice and Truth, if the only End and Deſign of Chriſt's Incarnation, Death, and Suffering, was no other than to procure for us a ſupernatural Power, or Privilege to enable us perfectly to obey the Laws of Righteouſneſs? Nay, I will venture to affirm, that if this were the only End of Chriſt's Incarnation, *&c.* it was not conſiſtent with the Juſtice, the Wiſdom, or Goodneſs of God the Father, to cloyſter and immure, the Son of his eternal Love, in a Manſion or Cottage of Clay, and to expoſe him to all the Miſeries, and Infirmities of human Life, and the bitter Pains and Agonies of Death on the Croſs, the moſt infamous and accurſed of all Deaths and Puniſhments; for might he not have conferred all thoſe ſupernatural and miraculous Powers and Privileges upon us, without expoſing an innocent Perſon to ſuch Miſeries and Afflictions, if there were not ſome other ſuperior and more neceſſary Reaſons for it? I would be very loth to ſuſpect Mr. *Shirley* of Socinianiſm, tho' this Principle of his looks very like it, they being the only Sect of Chriſtians that deny the Sufferings of Chriſt to be a Satisfaction to the Juſtice of God, or a Sacrifice of Atonement for the Sins Men. I grant, indeed, that Chriſt, by his Death and Sufferings, has merited the Grace of Regeneration, and all other Graces and Privileges for us, and that he hath promiſed to confer them on

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all that believe in his Name, and that earneſtly pray for, and humbly rely upon them; but this was far from being the ſole End of his Death and Sufferings; for if it were, there would be no Neceſſity for either, it being evident, that God could beſtow them upon us, without them: The ſatisfying, therefore, the Juſtice of his Father, for the Demerit of Sin, and making an Atonement for all Sin, both original and actual, was the ſole, principal, and chief End of his Incarnation, *&c.* and all other Things which he performed, or procured for us, are only Effects and Conſequences, or neceſſary Adjuncts of that firſt and principal End of both.

In a Word, Sir, I think the Scheme which I have laid down, of the Myſtery and Oeconomy of our Redemption, by a crucified Saviour, is the true Chriſtian, antient, and Catholick Scheme, and accounts for all the Parts and Myſteries of it, and ſhews the conſiſtency of them with all the divine Attributes; whereas Mr. *Shirley*'s Scheme (at leaſt as expreſſed in his Sermon) is altogether new, and, except among Socinians, unheard of before, and inconſiſtent with moſt of the divine Attributes.

"What ſtrange Hypotheſes, ſays Mr. *Shirley*, "would theſe Moral Philoſophers (for ſo, he ſays, he "muſt call them) ſupport? Where do they ſuppoſe "was the Neceſſity of Chriſt's Incarnation, *&c.* Did "he die merely that we might indulge ourſelves in "our Sins, having him as our Atonement? Where "would be the Juſtice, Greatneſs, or even Goodneſs "of this Deſign, *&c.*" Pag. 7. As for myſelf I as little know as I care, who theſe Moral Philoſophers, *in nubibus*, are, who make the indulging themſelves in their Sins, the End of Chriſt's Incarnation, *&c.* I profeſs to know none ſuch, they are not of my Acquaintance; whoever, or wherever they be, I bid them Anathema. If Mr. *Shirley* means his Brethren of the Clergy, who are not *More ejus furioſo et enthuſiaſtico*

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ſtaſtico religious, as I think it pretty evident he does, their conſtant preaching, and earneſt recommending the Duties of Chriſtian Morality, as explained, enlarged, and recommended by their divine Maſter, is an unconteſtable Evidence for them, that they do by no Means look upon the Death and Sufferings of Chriſt, as any Encouragement, or Privilege to indulge themſelves or others in their Sins, or in any one known Sin whatſoever. It is true, they teach, that if any Man ſin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the Righteous, and that he is the Propitiation for our Sins; and does not St. *John* * ſay, the ſame? Are they not his very Words; and dare Mr. *Shirley* contradict them? Dare he ſay that the Apoſtle did give any Encouragement to Men to indulge themſelves in their Sins, becauſe Jeſus Chriſt is our Advocate, and the Propitiation for our Sins? And yet he may as well charge the Apoſtle with giving this Encouragement as his Brethren the Clergy, ſince they only preach what the bleſſed Apoſtle taught them. But tho' the Clergy tell their Hearers, that if they ſin they have an Advocate with the Father, *&c.* yet they warn them at the ſame Time, and they let them know, that if any of them continue obſtinately, and habitually in the Commiſſion of any one known Sin, much more in the Commiſſion of many, the Death and Sufferings of Chriſt will avail them nothing, but to the contrary will aggravate their Damnation; and therefore they do by no Means imagine the indulging themſelves in their Sins, as this Gentleman (according to the Charity which by his late Converſion to Methodiſm he has learned) inſinuates, to be any Cauſe, Reaſon, or Neceſſity of Chriſt's Incarnation, Death, or Sufferings; to the contrary they very well know, and conſtantly preach, that this would be to contradict one main End and Deſign of his being manifeſted in the Fleſh, namely, that he might deſtroy the Works of the Devil.

* 1 *John* ii. 1.

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" PERHAPS we may be told, says he, that he died " that he might supply by his Merits, what was want- " ing in our own. So that if we perform a conside- " rable or a major Part of the Law of Righteousness, " his Righteousness will atone for the rest, *&c.*" *Ubi supra.* Surely never did any Christian before these great Pretenders to Bible Christianity, so much as doubt whether the Merits of Christ did atone for the want of Merit in us, provided we believe faithfully on him, and rely upon them; for what would become of us, who neither have nor can have any Merit of our own, in our best and greatest Services, and who are desired by our Lord, when we have done all that we are commanded, or more, if either were possible, to reckon ourselves unprofitable Servants; what, I say, in such Circumstances would become of us, if the Merits of Christ did not atone for us.

HERE then you see the Snake in the Grass plainly discovering himself: These Men imagine and pretend, that they perform the Works of Righteousness with such a sinless Perfection, that they need not the Merits of Christ, to atone for any Imperfection of Parts or Degrees, attending it; for Mr. *W---y*, in one of his Appeals, after professing full Communion with the Spirit of Quakerism, affirms plainly, that all Religion is but a dead Form, except Perfection by immediate Inspiration; but this of disclaiming the Merits of Christ, to atone for the Want of Merit in us, is a most impious and heteredox Notion, suggested by the Father of Lies, in order to fill the Entertainers of it with spiritual Pride, Blasphemy, *&c. &c.* and could never proceed from the Spirit of God or his Christ.

" Oh! but we pretend, that if we perform a consi- " derable or a major Part of the Law of God, Christ's " Righteousness will atone for the rest, *&c.*" But ths is another most false and scandalous Aspersion, plainly levelled at his Brethren, for they neither affirm or pretend any such Thing; to the contrary, they

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they affirm, and conſtantly maintain, that if Men do not with Integrity and Sincerity fulfil the whole Will, and Law of God, and if they ſhould wilfully, and habitually perſiſt in tranſgreſſing, any Part of either, known to be his Law or Will, that in that Caſe neither the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, nor the Merits of his Death and Sufferings, can be of any ſervice to them; for in this Senſe, *he that Offends in any one Particular*, of the Will or Law of God, *is guilty of all*, as before explained; but if they do chance, thro' Infirmity or Surprize, or the ſudden and unexpected Attack of an unforeſeen Temptation, to tranſgreſs any Particular of the Will or Law of God, and that they do upon Recollection, humbly, and with ſincere Sorrow and Contrition of Heart, confeſs and repent for the ſame, then we ſay that God is faithful and juſt to all his Promiſes in Chriſt, and will forgive us ſuch Sins, and cleanſe us from all ſuch Iniquities, for the ſake of Chriſt's ſinleſs and perfect Obedience, and the all-ſufficient Merits of his Death and Paſſion: and this I am well aſſured is the true Doctrine of the Goſpel, and of the Catholick Church, againſt which all the Devils and Gates of Hell ſhall never be able to prevail; and he that denies it, denies the Goſpel of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, and is an Infidel.

Is it not very pleaſant, dear Sir, to ſee this Gentleman run Riot upon his own falſe Suppoſition; for he ſuppoſes very falſely, that we pretend we may leave a Part of the Law of God undone, and perform the reſt, which he pleaſantly calls Patch-Work Salvation, and aſks many ridiculous and impertinent Queſtions about it. Pag. 7. Thus he ſets up a Man of Straw, and manfully attacks him, he builds Caſtles in the Air, which will coſt him no Labour to demoliſh; for having no Foundation they will fall of themſelves. But all this is deſigned by way of Reflection upon his Brethren, who do not join him in preaching up a ſinleſs Perfection, and the Poſſibility and Neceſſity of it; but

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but though we deny the Neceſſity or Poſſibility of a ſinleſs and perfect Obedience to the Law, yet we are as far from countenancing the wilful and habitual Neglect, or Tranſgreſſion of the leaſt Commandment of the Law, or allowing it to be conſiſtent with any Hope or Aſſurance of Salvation, as he is from Truth or Charity in theſe his Cenſures upon his Brethren: We only plead for the Grace, Equity, and Mercy of the Goſpel, for our involuntary Failings and unavoidable Infirmities, upon our Repentance, and Faith in the Merits of Chriſt; and he that denies or diſputes this, is no Chriſtian; he is fallen from Grace, and profeſſes himſelf ſtill under the Law or the Covenant of Works, and conſequently is under an indiſpenſible Obligation of the perfect and ſinleſs Obedience that was required by it.

But I believe you will think it now high Time to look more warily about us, for the Gentleman has got into a ſyllogiſing Humour, and fancies he carries all before him in Mode and Figure; for thus, at length, he argues in Form: "If the Law of God, ſays he, "be a perfect Law of Righteouſneſs, then Man's "Obedience muſt be a perfect Obedience to Righte-"ouſneſs." But the Law of God is a perfect Law of Righteouſneſs; *Ergo, &c.* To this dead-doing Syllogiſm I anſwer, by denying the Conſequence of the Major; for although the Law of God be indiſputably a perfect Law of Righteouſneſs, yet it is not now, under the Oeconomy of Grace and the Goſpel, that Man's Obedience ſhould be perfect, *i. e.* ſinleſs; but it is ſufficient that it be ſincere and hearty, otherwiſe there would be no Difference between the firſt and ſecond, or the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace; for it was only under the firſt Covenant of Works that a ſinleſs and perfect Obedience was required to the Law of God; but God ſeeing that the firſt Covenant did not anſwer the End, entered into another Covenant with Man, wherein he accepts of our hearty

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hearty and ſincere (though imperfect) Obedience, for the Sake of Chriſt's perfect and ſinleſs Obedience, and the infinite Merits of his Death and Paſſion: And it is the ſame Caſe in human Laws, which require an exact and perfect Obedience to every Tittle and Circumſtance of them; but there is a Court of Equity or Chancery to moderate the Rigour of the Law, which in itſelf, and conſidered as Law, is inflexible and inexorable, otherwiſe in many Caſes and Circumſtances extreme Law would be extreme Wrong: Even ſo (if I may be allowed to compare great Things with ſmall) though the Law of God be a perfect Law, and according to the Letter, and conſidered as Law, requires an exact and perfect Obedience; yet there is a Court of Equity or Chancery erected by the Covenant of Grace, in which Chriſt ſits as Chancellor, to moderate the Rigour of the Law, which in itſelf is inflexible and inexorable, and makes all due and equitable Allowance for ſuch Failings and Infirmities, as are not obſtinately and habitually continued and perſevered in.

2. I ANSWER, by diſtinguiſhing the Conſequence of the Major; for Man's Obedience muſt be perfect, with a Perfection of Parts I allow the Conſequence; with a Perfection of Degrees and Intentions, I deny it. Again, ſays he, "If Man's Obedience muſt be "perfect, then his Nature is or may be made capable "of performing ſuch Obedience." But the firſt is true; *Ergo*, *&c.* To this I anſwer two ways, 1. by denying the Conſequence of the Major with a Diſtinction; for I grant that Man's Nature may be rendered capable of performing a ſinleſs and perfect Obedience, by the abſolute Power of God, and by putting an irreſiſtible Force upon his Will, otherwiſe I deny it; and as the abſolute Power of God, and an irreſiſtible Force put upon Man's Will, would take away all Merit from our Obedience, and deſtroy the Foundation of Rewards and Puniſhments, he therefore uſes neither the one or the other, but gives ſufficient Aids of Grace, and Aſſiſtance

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ance of his holy Spirit, to enable us to do our Duty, in a Way conſiſtent with the Freedom of our Wills and the Liberty of our Elections, but applies no ſupernatural (as that imports miraculous) Power or irreſiſtible Force, for the Reaſons above aſſigned. 2. I anſwer, by denying the Minor with a Diſtinction, as in the Anſwer to the former Argument. And now that we are got into the ſyllogiſing Mood, where lies the Danger if I ſhould, in my Turn, venture upon a Syllogiſm or two: Thus, If we be not under the Law but under Grace, then a ſinleſs and perfect Obedience to the Law is neither expected nor required from us: *But we are not under the Law, but under Grace*, as St. *Paul* in ſo many expreſs Words aſſures us; therefore a ſinleſs and perfect Obedience is neither expected or required from us.

In this Argument, the only Propoſition which I ſuppoſe deniable is the Conſequence of the Major, the Minor being fenced by the infallible Authority of an Apoſtle; and the Conſequence of the Major I prove thus: If the eſſential Difference between being under the Law, and being under Grace, be, that a ſinleſs and perfect Obedience was required and expected under the former, but not under the latter, then if we be not under the Law but under Grace, a ſinleſs and perfect Obedience is neither required or expected from us. But the eſſential Difference between being under the Law and under Grace, is, that a ſinleſs and perfect Obedience was required under the former, but not under the latter; therefore, if we be not under the Law but under Grace, a ſinleſs and perfect Obedience is neither required nor expected from us. The major Propoſition I take to be undeniable, and if any one will deny the minor, let him aſſign any more eſſential Difference and he ſhall receive a farther Anſwer.

Once more, and adieu to ſyllogiſing till a farther Occaſion: It is poſſible, with the Aid and Aſſiſtance of ordinary Grace, to obey the Law with a ſinleſs and perfect

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perfect Obedience, or it is not; if not, then we are agreed; if it be, then let Mr. *Shirley*, or any other for him, account for the following Texts, *In many Things we offend all*, says St. *James*; *If we say that we have no Sin, we deceive ourselves and the Truth is not in us*, says St. *John*; *There is not a just Man upon Earth*, says *Solomon*, *that doth Good*, that is, constantly and perseveringly, *and that sinneth not*, Eccles. vii. 16. Let him name any one Saint, under any Dispensation of the Church, that was in all Degrees perfect, and never transgressed in any Degree; and lastly, let him show us how a sinless Perfection in any, is consistent with the peculiar Privilege and Prerogative of our Saviour, to whom alone, of all that ever were or ever will be born of *Adam*'s Seed, it belonged to be perfectly *holy*, *harmless*, *undefiled*, *and separate from Sinners*.

Mr. *Shirley* having thus far endeavoured to shew wherein preaching the Gospel doth not consist, proceeds in the next Place to shew us positively, what it is to preach the Gospel: "And this (he tells us) is "no more nor no less than to make known, recom- "mend, and inforce the Spirituality of it, *&c.* that "it is the Power of God unto Salvation to them that "believe; so that it is through Faith alone that we "receive the Spirit of God, or of Christ, that we may "be spiritually born again, and made his Children by "Adoption, *&c.*" Here he again excludes preaching the Works of evangelical Obedience from being any part of preaching the Gospel; for if this latter be no more nor no less than making known, *&c.* the Spirituality of the Gospel, it plainly follows, that he thinks preaching Morality, or the Works of evangelical Obedience, is preaching no part of the Gospel.

But to pass this, I could wish he had been a little more explicit, and told us what he means by the Spirituality of the Gospel; for this is too general and indefinite a Description to give us a distinct or definite Notion

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Notion of it, *Vir doloſus verſatur in generalibus*; he that deſigns to deceive, avoids as much as may be to deſcend to Particulars, he rather chooſes to convey himſelf and his Meaning away, in a Cloud of confuſed Generalities. But to return: If by the Spirituality of the Goſpel he means, that all its Precepts are pure, holy, and ſpiritual; that the Worſhip it requires and injoins is a ſpiritual Worſhip of the Heart and Soul, and not a carnal outward Worſhip, conſiſting of the Blood and Sacrifices of Bulls, and Goats, and other Animals, as among *Jews* and Heathens; if he means, that all its Promiſes and Rewards, and all its Motives to Obedience are not temporal or worldly, but ſpiritual, heavenly, and eternal, I can ſee no imaginable Reaſon why Mr. *Shirley* ſhould ſuppoſe or inſinuate, that preaching the Works of evangelical Obedience is inconſiſtent with preaching the Spirituality of the Goſpel, in this Senſe; ſince all that do preach the moral Works of evangelical Obedience, do preach them in this ſpiritual Senſe, and in no other: What other Spirituality of the Goſpel he means, or would be at, I for my part cannot conceive, nor I ſuppoſe can any other, till he is pleaſed to explain himſelf a little more explicitly than he has done. Whether it is by Faith alone (in the Senſe I know both he and his preſent Directors take the Word Faith) be the ſole and only Term and Condition of our receiving the Spirit of Adoption, or our Acceptance with God, is a Queſtion of too great Importance to undertake the Diſcuſſion of in the narrow Compaſs of a Letter, eſpecially in this, which has already ſwelled upon my Hands to a greater prolixity than I at firſt deſigned, and than, I fear, may be agreeable to you: I ſhall therefore trouble myſelf or you no farther (at leaſt at this Time) about it, than I am telling you, that ſo far as ever I could underſtand St. *Paul*, and the learned Commentators upon his Epiſtles, I think it very plain that the *Solifidians* of this and former Ages intirely miſtake that great

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great Apoſtle's Meaning; for by Faith, he does by no Means underſtand a ſingle Act of perſonal Faith, whereby a Man believes that his Sins are forgiven him; (which is the Senſe wherein our modern *Solifidians* take the Word Faith) but by Faith he means the whole complex Body of the Chriſtian Oeconomy, or Diſpenſation, in Oppoſition to the Oeconomy or Diſpenſation of the Law of *Moſes*; for ſo the Word Faith ſignifies in ſeveral Places of Scripture: Thus, *the hearing of Faith*, is the hearing of the whole Chriſtian Religion, *Gal.* iii. 2. *Preaching the Faith*, is preaching the whole Chriſtian Religion, *Rom.* x. 8. and *contending for the Faith*, is contending for the Chriſtian Religion: Even ſo when St. *Paul* ſays, *we are juſtified by Faith, and not by the Works of the Law*, it is, I think, very plain, that by Faith he does not mean a ſpecial Act of Faith, whereby we believe our Sins to be forgiven; but by Faith he means the whole Chriſtian Religion, by believing of which, and living according to the Rules and Precepts of it, we are now juſtified from all thoſe Things from which we could not be juſtified by the Law of *Moſes*.

THAT this and this only muſt be his Meaning, is very evident from the Occaſion and Deſign of not only his Epiſtle to the *Romans*, but of that alſo to the *Galatians*, which was the Controverſy then warmly diſputed between the *Gentile* and *Jewiſh* Converts; for ſuch of the *Jews* as received the Chriſtian Faith, were for impoſing Circumciſion and the whole Law of *Moſes* upon the *Gentile* Converts, affirming, that if they were not circumciſed, and kept the Law, they could not be ſaved: And though this Diſpute was for the preſent compromiſed in the Council of *Jeruſalem*, *Acts* xv. yet ſuch was the reſtleſs Zeal of the *Jewiſh* Converts, eſpecially the *Phariſees*, for their old Maſter, *Moſes*, that notwithſtanding the conciliary Decree of the Apoſtles and Biſhops of *Judæa*, they were for impoſing the whole Law upon the *Gentile* Converts.

Againſt

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Againſt theſe Judaiſing Chriſtians St. *Paul* (as the peculiar Apoſtle of the *Gentiles*) vigorouſly oppoſes himſelf, vindicating their Liberty againſt this Impoſition, eſpecially in his Epiſtles to the *Romans* and *Galatians*, where theſe Judaiſing Chriſtians were moſt numerous, and prevailing; conſtantly affirming that the Chriſtian Diſpenſation is now the only Means whereby we are to expect Juſtification and Acceptance with God, and not the Diſpenſation of *Moſes*; the former he calls Faith, and the latter Works. This were eaſily demonſtrated, by the Arguments which the Apoſtle uſes in and throughout his whole Epiſtle to the *Romans*, if I had Time, or were it neceſſary; for whoever will carefully attend to the Train and Tenour of his Reaſoning, in his Epiſtle to the *Romans*, will be eaſily convinced, if he be not obſtinate, that he had this Controverſy between the *Jewiſh* and *Gentile* Converts always in View, and that all his Arguments and Reaſons are levelled againſt this impoſing Humour of the *Jewiſh* Converts, and that all he ſays concerning Juſtification is ſolely relative to that Controverſy; and conſequently in the preſent State of the Church, we are but very little, if any thing at all, concerned in the Conſequence of it. In a Word, St. *Paul* (that I may uſe the Words of the great Dr. *Stillingfleet*, in his Sermon on *Rom.* i. 16.) is ſo far from aſſerting that our Juſtification, or the Terms of it, depends upon a ſingle Act of Faith, as diſtinguiſhed from evangelical Obedience, that his whole Diſcourſe turns upon this ſingle Queſtion, Whether God will pardon the Sins of Men upon any other Terms than thoſe that are declared and ſet forth by the Chriſtian Diſpenſation? the former he calls Works, and the latter Faith, and every where maintains the Negative of the Queſtion; that is, he maintains that neither the Law of Nature and Reaſon, nor the Law of *Moſes*, can gain us Remiſſion of Sins, but only the Chriſtian Law delivered to us in the Goſpel, which he always calls by the Name

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Name of Faith, as he does the other by the Name of Works. "I know (ſays the ſame great Doctor) that "the Subtilty of latter Times has made St. *Paul* diſ-"pute, in the Queſtion of Juſtification, not like one "brought up at the Foot of *Gamaliel*, but of the "Maſter of the Sentences; but Men (ſays he) did "not underſtand their Religion a Bit the worſe then, "for being plain and eaſy; and, it may be, if others "ſince had underſtood their Religion better, there "would never need ſo much Subtilty to explain, or ſo "many nice Diſtinctions to defend it: The Apoſtle "makes the Terms of Juſtification and Salvation the "very ſame, for as he ſays that we are juſtified by "Faith, ſo he ſays here, that the Goſpel is the Pow-"er of God unto Salvation, to every one that believes. "If then a ſingle Act of Faith be ſufficient for Juſ-"tification, why not for Salvation?" But this laſt our modern Solifidians do not pretend to; they are forced to acknowledge, that the good Works of Evangelical Obedience, are the ordinary and ſtated Terms of Salvation; but why not of Juſtification alſo, I could never yet hear any convincing Reaſon? Nay, ſometimes (ſuch is the Force of Truth) they acknowledge, that good Works are neceſſary to Juſtification, as well as Salvation. I ſhall give an evident Inſtance of this in Mr. *Weſley*, who is very often carried beyond his Judgment, thro' his vehement Zeal for this Doctrine of Juſtification; for in his *Earneſt Appeal*, *Dublin*, print. Edit. 5. Part 1. Pag. 6. he lays down this as a Principle, "That juſtifying Faith, is never given "to the Righteous or Godly, or to ſuch as are diſ-"poſed or prepared to receive God's Favours, but to "the Wicked and Ungodly, who never in all their "Lives did any one good Thing, but every Thing "that deſerved everlaſting Damnation, *&c.*" Now it is not the monſtrous Impiety of this Doctrine that I am at preſent concerned for, but to ſhew how he contradicts all this; for in another Part of his *Appeal*

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he confeſſes, " That, in the Nature of Things, Re-
" pentance muſt precede juſtifying Faith, and this
" Repentance (he affirms) muſt conſiſt not only of a
" ſincere Reſolution of Amendment, but an actual
" producing Fruits meet for Repentance, in doing
" Good, forgiving our Brother, attending the Ordi-
" nances of God, and obeying him according to the
" Meaſure and Proportion of Grace, which we have
" received." All this, I ſay, he acknowledges muſt of Neceſſity go before juſtifying Faith. Now if he or Mr. *Shirley* can reconcile theſe two Paſſages, we may expect a friendly Agreement between the greateſt Contradictions in Nature.

As to the remaining Part of Mr. *Shirley*'s Sermon, where he lays down what his Flock is to expect from him, and he from his Flock, I will only ſay, that if he be as good as his Promiſe to his Pariſhioners, I will venture to aſſure him, that his Brethren will be ſo far from finding Fault with him, that they will highly applaud and rejoice with and for him, and that he need not doubt but his Flock will have a ſuitable Regard and Veneration for him. But ſtill I cannot but obſerve, that he cannot poſſibly forbear reflecting on his Brethren as he goes along; for he tells his Hearers, " That he will feed them with Goſpel Proviſion, and
" fill their Souls with the Bread of Heaven, not ſtarv-
" ing them with empty Declamations and eloquent
" Harangues, ſcribbled out of the firſt Book that comes
" to Hand, upon ſome Moral Virtue, *&c.*" Here is another plain Side-ſtroke at his Brethren, inſinuating, that their Sermons are nothing elſe but Declamations upon Moral Virtue, and even theſe not the Product of their own Study, but ſcribbled out of ſome Book. I do not know whether this Reflection be founded upon any certain Knowledge he has of any one that does ſo, or whether this might not have been his own Practice, before he was inſpired, and ſo (according to the vulgar Expreſſion,) meaſures his Brethren's Corn

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Corn by his own Buſhel. But be that as it will, I will venture to ſay, that it had not been amiſs, nor the leaſt Diſparagement to him (how high an Opinion ſoever he may entertain of his own Parts, whether acquired or infuſed,) if he had ſcribbled ſomething out of ſome good Book, at leaſt taken ſome Hints from thence, before he preached or printed his Sermon.

"LET not any (ſays he) affirm that I do not preach "up, recommend, and inſiſt on good Works as ne- "ceſſary, as ſome ſlanderouſly Report of me." Pag. 16. Does he ſo? How then, in God's Name, comes it that he has evidently made it one main End (at leaſt) of his Sermon, to prove, that preaching Morality is not preaching the Goſpel? How comes it that he reflects on his Brethren for their eloquent Harangues, upon ſome Moral Virtue, which is nothing elſe but preaching good Works, when he does at the ſame Time confeſs that he does ſo himſelf? What! is *Saul* alſo among the Prophets? and Mr. *Shirley*, (notwithſtanding all his Declamations againſt them,) among the Moral Philoſophers? Methinks theſe Things do not hang well together.

OH! but he preaches up a lively Faith, and not a dead one, and no Faith is lively that does not produce good Works; therefore he preaches good Works not directly (no, have a Care of that, that would be high Treaſon againſt Mr. *Weſley's* favourite Doctrine concerning Juſtification,) but implicitly, and by Conſequence. Mighty well! but pray why not directly and by Name, (if they be neceſſary to Salvation) as well as implicitly? Would there be any Harm, or Danger in doing ſo, without going ſo far about the Buſh? I apprehend not, eſpecially as St. *James* tells us, that *Faith without Works is dead*, and that it is but the Carcaſe of Faith, which like Carrion ſtinks in the Noſtrils of God; and that St. *Paul* tells us, if we had all the Faith in the World ſo that we could remove Mountains, and tho' we had all Know-

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ledge, and underſtood all Myſteries, and, in a Word, could ſpeak with Tongues of Men and Angels, yet, alas! without Charity (that is without good Works, for Charity is the fulfilling of the Law, the End of the Commandment, and the very Bond of Perfection) all would ſignify juſt----nothing; we ſhould be no better than old, noiſy, brazen Kettles, or tinkling Cymbals. Now if theſe Things be ſo, I do humbly preſume, that it is as (I had almoſt ſaid more) neceſſary to preach good Works, as Faith, becauſe it is good Works that give Life, Force, and Energy to Faith, and that without them, all the Faith in the World will not juſtify us; which I prove thus: If Faith without Works be dead, then Faith without Works cannot juſtify us; but *Faith without Works is dead*, as the Apoſtle St. *James* expreſly tells us. Therefore Faith without Works cannot juſtify us. The Conſequence of the Major, the only Propoſition which I ſuppoſe deniable in the Argument, I prove thus: If a dead Faith cannot poſſibly juſtify us, then if Faith without Works be dead, Faith without Works cannot poſſibly juſtify us. But a dead Faith cannot poſſibly juſtify us, therefore if Faith without Works be dead, Faith without Works cannot poſſibly juſtify us.

Mr. *Shirley*, after telling his Audience, that he thinks it his Duty to preach the whole Moral Law to them, *&c.* ſays, if he ſhould leave them there, if he ſhould leave them to the Weakneſs and Corruption of the fallen Man, he would bring them bad News, *&c.* but he promiſes them another and far ſuperior Nature, and the Power of God for their Salvation, *&c. Ibid. ubi Supra.* But whoever ſaid or imagined, that Man in his preſent State of corrupted Nature, was able to perform the Whole or any Part of the Law of God, without the Aids of Grace, and the Aſſiſtance of the Spirit? Who, I ſay, except *Pelagians* ever affirmed or thought of any ſuch thing? If therefore he Means no more than the Aids of Grace and

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and the Assistance of the Holy Spirit, in the due and regular Use of the Means of Grace, I do presume that no Man will, or indeed can, find Fault with him for recommending these things to his Flock as earnestly as he can. But I very much doubt that he means a great deal more than this; and that he is of his (Mr. *Wesley*'s) Opinion, who, in his *Serious Answer to Doctor* Trap, insists, "That Christ stands as our Regeneration, and that by him we have the very same paradisaical Nature, which *Adam* had before his Fall, and which had he not fallen, would have been transmitted to all his Posterity: He affirms (I say) that by our Regeneration in Christ, we have that very paradisaical Nature propagated in us, nay, the very identical paradisaical Nature which Christ, at his Incarnation, assumed in the Womb of the blessed Virgin *Mary*, in order to enable us to obey the Law with a sinless Perfection, *&c.*" A Doctrine no less impious in itself, than contradictory to the Tenets of the Church of God in all Ages, and of our own Church, which acknowledges the Corruption of Nature to remain even in the Regenerate.

This, I suppose, is what he means by that other, and superior Nature, which he promises to put his Hearers constantly in Mind of, and flatters them with the Hopes of, to no other Purpose (I mean not his, but the Purpose of the Doctrine) but to fill them with Blasphemy, and Spiritual Pride, as it did a poor blind Lay-preacher among the Swadlers, who affirmed, that he was as righteous, and as free from Sin as (*Horresco referens!*) Jesus Christ, and that it was impossible he could sin, because the Holy Ghost dwelt bodily in him. But I must do that Justice to Mr. *Wesley*, to declare, that he silenced and degraded him, and, in a Letter under his Hand to myself, confessed that he was a vile Enthusiast.

I remember, that being once urged with the Petition in the Lord's Prayer, *Thy will be done on Earth*

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as it is in Heaven, in Support of ſinleſs Perfection I aſked my Antagoniſt, what he thought of theſe Words of our Saviour, *Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect*; and whether he thought they implied an exact Equality: He was aware of the Conſequence of anſwering; for if he ſaid they did not, it was obvious to return the ſame Anſwer to his own Inſtance, and therefore he did ſay, that he believed it was poſſible to be as perfect as our heavenly Father; this I can aver for Truth; but as there were no Witneſſes by, and that I know, by many Experiences, theſe Men, notwithſtanding all their Pretences to Bible-Chriſtianity, do not ſcruple to deny their Words, I think it would be to no Purpoſe to mention the Perſon's Name.

IT was upon this Principle, I ſuppoſe, that the blaſphemous Wretch, *Muggleton*, took upon him the Perſon of Chriſt, and had *Hoſanna to the Son of David, &c.* ſung before him thro' the Streets of *Briſtol*, by the Rabble that attended him; and tho' we have not as yet ſeen or heard of any ſuch barefaced or publick Blaſphemies as this, among the Methodiſts, yet if we may judge what may be, by what has been, the Conſequence of the modern Pretences to the immediate Inſpiration of the Spirit, in a Generation or two more (when Mr. *Weſley*, who at preſent keeps this Spirit within ſome Bounds, is gathered to his Fathers) may be fatal.

MONTANUS, the Arch-Heretick, ſet up at firſt with the very ſame Pretences that Mr. *Whitefield*, and Mr. *Weſley* have done; he made no Innovation in the Faith; he was perfectly orthodox in the Doctrines of the Trinity, Incarnation, and Perſon of Chriſt, which was the Rock that all former Hereticks had ſplit upon; he only accuſed the Biſhops and Clergy as negligent in their Duties, that they did not preach the Spirituality of the Goſpel; in ſhort, that they were mere Strangers to the Spirit and Life of Chriſtianity, and

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and ſunk into a meer animal Life, (or in Mr. *Shirley*'s Language) they were all nothing but Moral Philoſophers: He therefore, without any Call, ſet up for a Reformer of theſe Abuſes, and pretended to introduce a new Oeconomy, and a more ſpiritual Diſpenſation, than the Church had yet known. None more ſtrict in outward Appearance than he, his male and female Prophets and Followers; their Morality was unexceptionable, and more ſo than that of our modern Methodiſts or Montaniſts; his Diſcipline, Mortification, and Renunciation of the World, far more ſevere; and his Pretence to the Spirit of Martyrdom and taking up the Croſs, as confident. All this appears from *Tertullian*, the only Diſciple of his whoſe Writings or any Part of them, are come to our Hands; and yet, notwithſtanding all this, never did any Heretick do ſo much Miſchief to Chriſtianity as he and his Followers have done, as appears manifeſtly from the hiſtorical Account of Montaniſm publiſhed by Doctor *Hicks*, and ſuppoſed to be wrote by Mr. *Nelſon*, Author of the Faſts and Feſtivals of the Church of *England*; I would heartily recommend the reading of it to Mr. *Shirley*, or any one in the leaſt inclined to Enthuſiaſm.

Tho' Mr. *Shirley*'s Reflections on his Brethren, are viſible enough to every Reader of his Sermon, yet leſt that ſhould not be a ſufficient Indication of his Deſign, he has printed ſome Lines from the blind Fanatick *Milton*, who, (tho' he was an excellent Poet, yet every one muſt allow he was an improper Perſon to appeal to, conſidering all Circumſtances, for the Character of any Clergy) in the Title Page of his Diſcourſe, by which it is certain he could have no other View than defaming his Brethren. It ill becomes a Clergyman to leſſen the Characters, or publiſh even the real Faults and Failings of his Brethren; nay, it is a Sin of a very heinous Nature, becauſe it diſqualifies them from doing that Good, they might otherwiſe do, the Succeſs of their Labours depending in a great Meaſure on

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the good or ill Opinion which their Flocks have of them. It is for this Reaſon, I ſuppoſe, that all Swadlers, from the higheſt to the loweſt, are ſo induſtrious in trumpeting the Infirmities of the Clergy, and rather then fail, falſely accuſing and laying to their Charge things that they know not, on purpoſe to alienate the Affections of the People from them, that they may gain the more Proſelytes among them. But I ſhould not be ſurpriſed at this, tho' I cannot but be both ſurpriſed and concerned, that a Man of Mr. *Shirley*'s Family and Education, ſhould have recourſe to ſuch unmanly Arts; for it is the uſual Conduct of all Sectaries and Schiſmaticks, to fall foul upon the Biſhops and Clergy, and none, that ever I read of, do more outrageouſly do ſo than the Swadlers; the Enemy of Mankind never raiſed up any ſuch, but their firſt Attack would be upon them. I remember a Paſſage in the great St. *Cyprian*, where he ſays, that Hereſies and Schiſms ſpring from no other Root but from Contempt, Diſreſpect, and Diſobedience to the Biſhops of God's Church; and in his Vindication of himſelf againſt a certain Schiſmatick, by Name (if I remember right) *Puppianus*, who denied his being a Biſhop, among ſeveral other Proofs of the Truth of his Epiſcopacy, he uſes this as one very convincing one, that never any Perſecution aroſe, either from the Heathen Magiſtrates, or from Hereticks or Schiſmaticks, againſt the Chriſtians of *Carthage*, but the firſt Brunt of it was ſure to fall upon him, he was ſure to be the firſt proſcribed, and to have his Goods confiſcated; *ut ſe* (ſays he) *non Deo conſtituente, ſaltem Diabolo me Epiſcopum perſequente, credas*; that if you do not believe God conſtituting, you may at leaſt believe the Devil perſecuting me as a Biſhop.

In the laſt Paragraph of that Diviſion of his Sermon, wherein Mr. *Shirley* lays down his own Duty to his Flock, he tells us that, " if ever there comes an " Age,

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" Age, in which the Miniſters of God's Word, in-
" ſtead of being holy, ſhall be found worldly,
" proud, coveteous, *&c. &c.* Perſecutors of the
" Truth, and Oppoſers of the Spirit; he will ven-
" ture, without the Gift of Prophecy, to foretell, that
" Chriſtianity in that Age will be treated as Prieſt-
" craft, *&c.*" *P.* 11. It is very evident to me, that this is the Light in which he looks upon all his Brethren, and that all theſe Characters of worldly, proud, *&c.* are thus obliquely and hypothetically given them, only on Account of the two laſt, namely, Perſecutors of the Truth, and Oppoſers of the Spirit, by which it is plain he means, the Clergy's endeavouring to maintain the Doctrine, of the Church, againſt the peculiar Doctrines of Methodiſm, and their not believing or allowing every bold and arrogant Pretender, who either fancies or pretends, to be under the immediate and extraordinary Influence and Inſpiration of the Holy Ghoſt, without producing ſuch Credentials as all thoſe, whoever were actually under ſuch Influence, *&c.* produced for theirs; and which the Catholick Church of all Ages, required in, or from all ſuch Pretenders, under the Penalty of being condemned as Enthuſiaſts or Impoſtors; the former theſe Men call perſecuting the Truth, the latter oppoſing the Spirit, *hinc illæ Lacrymæ.* Hence proceed all this Malice, Virulence, and uncharitable Cenſures of theſe great Pretenders to Bible Chriſtianity, on the Clergy, who if they could be prevailed upon to allow, and ſubſcribe to all their peculiar and diſtinguiſhing Doctrines; and to acknowledge themſelves to be pneumatical or Pneumataphoroi, that is, as full of the Holy Ghoſt as ever the Apoſtles were, ſaving only the outward working Miracles, which Mr. *Weſley*, in his *Appeals* pleads for, as the undoubted Right and Privilege of every Chriſtian; if the Clergy (I ſay) could be prevailed upon, not to bear their Teſtimony againſt theſe groundleſs Illluſions, they would be the Methodiſts own

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own white Boys, and I am confident a great Part, if not the whole, of the foregoing invidious, ſly, and indirect Defamation of his Brethren would be dropt, and this Compliance of the Clergy, would prevail more with the Methodiſts, than it ſeems Charity can do; for it would, I am fully perſwaded, cover a Multitude of their Failings and Imperfections.

In the mean Time, it is to be hoped, that there are but very few, if any at all, of his Brethren, that deſerve to be repreſented in altogether ſuch black Colours as they are here painted; if Mr. *Shirley* knows any that do, he ſhould name him, or endeavour to reform him or them by private Advice, and fraternal Correction, in the Spirit of Meekneſs and Love, and not thus openly and publickly defame the whole Body of his Brethren; for I do affirm, that the Defamation is not a Bit the leſs, or the more excuſable, by being thus in general, and hypothetically caſt upon them, but is thereby greatly aggravated, and the more criminal; it is an accumulated Scandal in which all are involved; and yet every ſingle Perſon deprived of an Opportunity, or even a Poſſibility, of clearing himſelf or his Character, which is the moſt criminal way of defaming, and leaves the deepeſt and moſt dangerous Wounds behind it, becauſe to apply a Remedy is rendered impracticable.

Indeed if the Character which the Methodiſts give of Mr. *Shirley*, before his Converſion, be true, he ſeems here to give an exact Copy, or Picture of himſelf; and ſo, I ſuppoſe, he judges of his Brethren by what he was himſelf before his Reformation, not without broad Hints, that they cannot be otherwiſe, unleſs they follow his Example, in joining with the Methodiſts. But if any of his Brethren (which God forbid) ſtand in need of ſuch a Reformation, or μετανοιαν, as he did, (I ſpeak only by Information from his late Friends) he has not ſhewed that Prudence and Moderation in his, to induce or incline them to take Pattern

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Pattern by it; he has, it is true, avoided *Scylla*, but then he has run himself in *Charybdis*. There is a Medium in all Things, and all Extremes are vicious; there is a middle Course, which is always the safest to be steered, between Levity, Licentiousness, and Profaneness on one Hand, and Pharisaical Superstition, Starchness, and Superciliousness on the other: Cannot Men be as soberly religious as they please? Cannot they be wise to Sobriety, without reflecting upon or censuring their Brethren? May not they make their Light shine before Men, without being the Heralds and Trumpeters of their own Perfections, and publishing them to the World? May not they leave their Actions and Conduct to speak for and recommend themselves? And will not the silent Applause and Testimony of their own Consciences satisfy them, unless the World is apprized what great Saints they are? So that I may justly ask them, as the Poet does such Trumpeters of their own Virtues, *Usque adeone scire tuum nihil est, nisi te scire hoc sciat alter?* Persius.

But after all, what if all these Reflections are Faults of their own Creation and Invention? As for Instance, if a Clergyman, who has a large and numerous Family, and an Income hardly sufficient to supply him and them with the necessaries of Life, in any decent way, becoming his sacred Function and Character, if he having a Genius thereto, applies himself to any virtuous Industry, in order to provide for his Charge, that they be not left upon the Parish, after his Death, tho' his doing so be visibly no Hindrance to the discharge of his Duty, such a Clergyman is, by these charitable Censors, condemned as a Worldling and a covetous Person; nay, if he endeavours by the most unexceptionable Means, to better his temporal Circumstances in the Church, he is deemed worse than a Heathen or a Publican, nay than *Simon* the Magician, (see Mr. *Wesley*'s *Address to the Clergy.*) If a Clergyman thinks himself obliged in Conscience, to attend that

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that Part and Portion of the Lord's Flock that is committed to his Charge, and labours to do his Duty towards them, according to the beſt of his Skill and Knowledge, thinking himſelf accountable to the great Shepherd of the Flock, for them and them only; if he does not thruſt his Sickle into another Man's Harveſt he is reckoned indolent, a meer Quietiſt, and intirely void of Chriſtian Zeal. If he does not ſcruple to enjoy the Gifts of God, and the good Things of this Life, in a more liberal Proportion than the meer Neceſſities of Nature require; if he is careful to keep up and encourage mutual Hoſpitality between his Pariſhioners, he is immediately cenſured, as our bleſſed Saviour was by the Scribes and Phariſees, as a Winebibber and a Glutton, and a Friend to Publicans and Sinners.

THUS, then, theſe great Pretenders to Bible Chriſtianity cenſure all thoſe that do not join with them in their Phariſaical Superſtition and Pride; but it is enough for the Servant that he be as his Maſter, and the Diſciple as his Lord; and if the Scribes and Phariſees, their venerable Forefathers, did thus cenſure our Lord and Maſter, we cannot expect that theſe their Succeſſors will afford any better Treatment to us his Servants and Diſciples.

"METHINKS, ſays he, I ſee one reproach him, "(that is one of his Brethren whom he calls Moral "Philoſophers) had you preached the Spirituality of "the Goſpel Covenant, I ſhould have laid hold on "that as the only Means of Salvation; had your "Life and Converſation been truly ſpiritual, holy, "and pious, I would have been charmed with the "amiable Example, and would have followed it; "on the contrary, I could not be influenced by thoſe "poor, hungry Doctrines (ſo he calls the Doctrines "of Chriſtian Morality and a good Life) which you "preached, becauſe I did obſerve your Practice not "to be conformable to them, *&c.*" *pag.* 11, 12.

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THIS is a fine, plauſible, and fanciful Repreſentation, to captivate the Vulgar and to catch Woodcocks; but poſſibly it may with much greater Truth and Juſtice be retorted upon himſelf, and his late Maſters and Directors; for, Methinks I hear one reproach him, had you followed the Example of your Lord and Maſter, and preached true Chriſtian Morality, as he did in his Sermon on the Mount of *Olives*; had you told me that I muſt work out my own Salvation with Fear and Trembling, and not to depend on any other than the Aid and Aſſiſtance of Grace and the Holy Spirit, to help and ſtrengthen my own ſincere and hearty Endeavours, in the diligent Uſe of the Means of Grace, I might have laboured to avoid my preſent Doom; but, inſtead of this, you flattered me with falſe Hopes of the extraordinary and miraculous Inſpirations, and ſupernatural Powers and Privileges of the Holy Ghoſt, with being as full of the Spirit as the holy Apoſtles were; you daily and conſtantly preached theſe Things unto me; your almoſt conſtant Subject and Theme were theſe, and Juſtification by Faith alone, without the Works of Evangelical Obedience; nay, you told me, that God does not give juſtifying Faith to the Righteous, or to thoſe that are prepared and diſpoſed to receive his Favours, but to the Wicked and Ungodly, who never did any one good Thing, but every Thing that deſerved Death and Damnation: [See Mr. *Weſley*'s *Appeal*, in the Place before referred to] I therefore neglected, nay, I deſpiſed all good Works, thinking the more Good I did, the farther (according to this Doctrine) I was from, and the more indiſpoſed and unfit to receive juſtifying Faith; I took a ſtrong Confidence and Preſumption for Faith, and every Impulſe of my own heated Imagination for the immediate Dictate of the Holy Ghoſt: I thereupon became ſpiritually proud, ſupercilious, and an uncharitable Cenſurer of my Brethren, that were not of my way

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way of thinking, and I looked upon them as no Chriſtians; but now, alas! notwithſtanding all my Confidence and Aſſurance, I am doomed to everlaſting Miſery, and this occaſioned by your flattering my Pride and Vanity, and filling me with a Mouthful of Moon-ſhine.

THUS, Sir, you ſee how eaſy a Matter it is to retort Mr. *Shirley*'s Repreſentation back upon himſelf and his Maſters; with this Difference, that his Repreſentation is only founded upon his own falſe and uncharitable Cenſures, but mine upon the publick, notorious, and avowed Doctrines and Principles of the Methodiſts.

AND now, Sir, I am afraid I have tired your Patience with this long Letter, which I am perſuaded contains nothing but what occurred to your own good Senſe and Judgment, upon your firſt reading Mr. *Shirley*'s Sermon; but as I promiſed to give you my Sentiments of it, I was willing to give it a thorough Examination, and do hope and deſire, that if any Thing has dropped from my Pen which is not according to ſound Doctrine, you will be ſo kind as to let me know it with the Freedom and Sincerity of a Brother and a Friend; *Humanum eſt errare*, and no Man is infallible; the greateſt Defect, I apprehend, is, that you will find Fault with the Prolixity of it, and indeed it is what I deſigned at firſt as much as might be to avoid; but I know not how it has ſtole upon me inſenſibly, it is my Foible, but I hope a pardonable one, as it is confeſſed and acknowledged. I have no Sort of Prejudice to Mr. *Shirley*, I wiſh him all the Happineſs he can deſire, and am only ſorry that he does not take the truly Chriſtian and pacifick Advice of his Curate in his Letter of the 24th of *July*; for how much ſoever he deſpiſes his Youth, yet I aſſure him, it would be no Sort of Shame or Reproach for him to learn from him: St. *Peter* humbly and patiently

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tiently bore the Reproof of St. *Paul*, though he was reckoned his Superior in Age, and of a longer Standing in the Apoſtolick College; I wiſh Mr. *Shirley* may follow his Example. I am,

Reverend and worthy Sir,

Hollymount, *Decem.* 3, 1758.

Your very affectionate Brother,

And moſt humble Servant,

JAMES CLARK.

FINIS.

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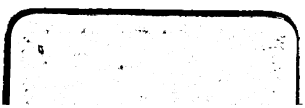

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